PCZONE

THE BEST FOR PC GAMERS

#109 DECEMBER 2001

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

STAR WARS GALACTIC BATTLEGROUNDS

A new hope for Star Wars fans as Age Of Empires strikes back

EXCLUSIVE!

COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO

New developers, new screenshots, new info... The best just got better

TINY COMPO: What is the name of the ship flying over our logo?

IF YOUR COVERMOUNT IS MISSING PLEASE CONSULT YOUR NEWSAGENT

www.pczone.co.uk

9 771354 070056 12

ISSUE #109 DECEMBER 2001 £3.99

THIS IS MASTER rallye

5,000 KM OF CROSS-COUNTRY RALLYING FROM THE

MEDITERRANEAN TO THE MIDDLE EAST...

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND DANGEROUS TERRAIN IN THE WORLD...TEN DAYS OF GRUELLING RACING, DUST AND PAIN

Those who make it to and complete all stages of the Master Rallye circuit itself will each have a truly personal experience during their campaign. Different stories to tell. Luck, personalities, experience and skill all play a part in Master Rallye. We're not saying it can replace your friends, but Master Rallye is a great leap forward in gaming entertainment that should maximise the video game "hit" to a new and huge audience.

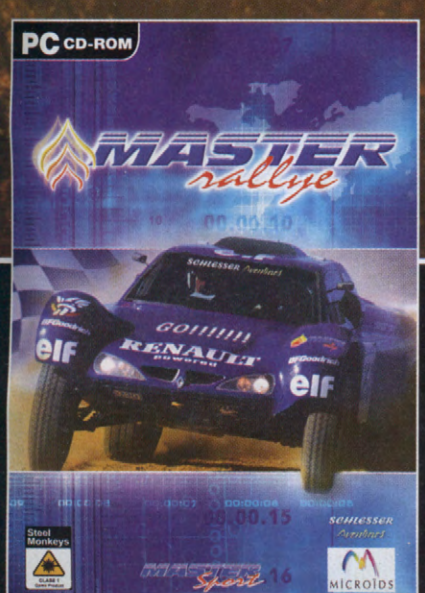
Features

OVER 30 HUGE RACES BASED ON OFFICIAL ARCHIVE DATA FROM RECENT MASTER RALLYE EVENTS.

ADVANCED FULLY INTERACTIVE AI DRIVERS WITH INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITIES.

21 FULLY CUSTOMISABLE, ACCURATELY RENDERED LICENSED VEHICLES.

UNRELENTING AND MASSIVE GAMEPLAY PROVIDED BY MASTER RALLYE CAMPAIGN, CUP, INVITATION, CHALLENGE, ARCADE AND PRACTICE MODES



COMING THIS WINTER

WWW.MICROIDS.COM

MASTER Sport

SCHLESSER Aventures

PC CD

PlayStation 2

Steel Monkeys

CLASS 1 Game Product

MICROÏDS

© 2000 Steel Monkeys Limited and Master Sport SA. "Steel Monkeys" is a trade mark of Steel Monkeys Limited. Published by Microids S.A. "Microids" is a trade mark of Microids S.A. "Master Rallye" is a trademark of Master Group. All rights reserved.

ISSUE #109 DEC 2001

PCZONE CONTENTS

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

STAR WARS: GALACTIC BATTLEGROUNDS

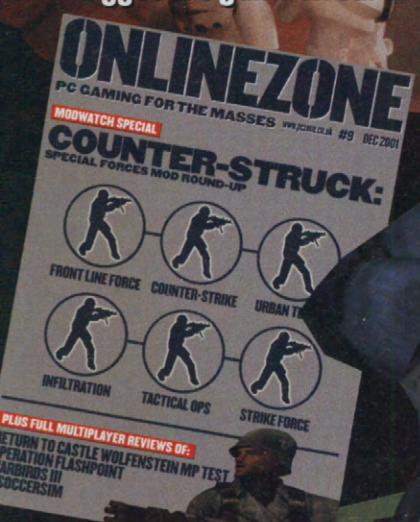
PAGE 66

Imperial troops have entered the base! Imperial troops have entered the base!

COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO

42

As Counter-Strike prepares a single-player strike, we talk to the new developers on their plans for the biggest PC game on earth



REVIEWED

OPERATION FLASHPOINT

95

Finally Operation Flashpoint lives up to its online promise

MODWATCH SPECIAL

SPECIAL FORCES MOD ROUND-UP

From Counter-Strike to Urban Terror – the best real-world mods reviewed

48

BATTLEFIELD 1942

PAGE 110
REALITY CHECK
Steve Hill discovers the art of war is very different to the real thing

ON THE CDS

FULL DETAILS PAGE 138

SPIDER-MAN
COUNTER-STRIKE V1.3
FULL 103MB UPGRADE
MAX PAYNE
OPERATION FLASHPOINT

OVER 100 MAPS & MODS
INCLUDING:
FRONT LINE FORCE, INFILTRATION, URBAN TERROR

PLUS! STRONGHOLD • THE NATIONS • SHEEP, DOG 'N' WOLF • CODENAME OUTBREAK • 100S OF MAPS AND MISSIONS FOR QUAKE III, TRIBES 2, SERIOUS SAM, FLASHPOINT AND COUNTER-STRIKE

REVIEWS

NEW GAMES

66 STAR WARS: GALACTIC BATTLEGROUNDS
72 CONQUEST: FRONTIER WARS
74 SPIDER-MAN
76 C&C: RED ALERT 2 – YURI'S REVENGE
78 F1 2001
80 MYST III: EXILE
82 PLANET OF THE APES
100 KOHAN: IMMORTAL SOVEREIGNS
102 STAR MONKEY
102 EVIL TWIN
103 DIRECTOR OF FOOTBALL
103 THE WEAKEST LINK
104 TOON CAR
104 PARKAN: IRON STRATEGY

Monkey trouble in *Planet Of The Apes.*

BUDGET GAMES

106 COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES
106 THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT
106 HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC III
107 CUTTHROATS
107 GANGSTERS: ORGANISED CRIME
107 JONAH LOMU RUGBY
107 REDGUARD
107 VIVA FOOTBALL
107 CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER SEASON 97/98

WIN THE TOP 10 PC GAMES
SEE THE PC ZONE CHARTS PAGE 22

NEWS

10 MOBILE FORCES
They can move and everything.
12 PROJECT NOMADS
Voted Best Game at ECTS 2001.
14 OBLIVION LOST
But at least Arsenal scraped a draw.
28 KOREAN CONNECTION
A country that loves its games.
36 HOTSHOTS
All-new action from *Unreal 2*.

REGULARS

38 MAILBOX
Nothing better to do? Have a moan.
110 REALITY CHECK
Steve Hill storms the castle…
116 RECOMMENDED HARDWARE
Kit yourself out with the best.
118 CHEATMASTER
For those who give up easily…
120 WATCHDOG
Where we pretend we care…
122 DEAR WANDY
Our technical wizard waves his wand.
126 TOP 100
Complete your collection.
136 RETROZONE
Where we go back in time.
142 EXTENDED PLAY
Give your games a new lease of life.
146 COMMENT
Mike Anderiesz is an angry man.

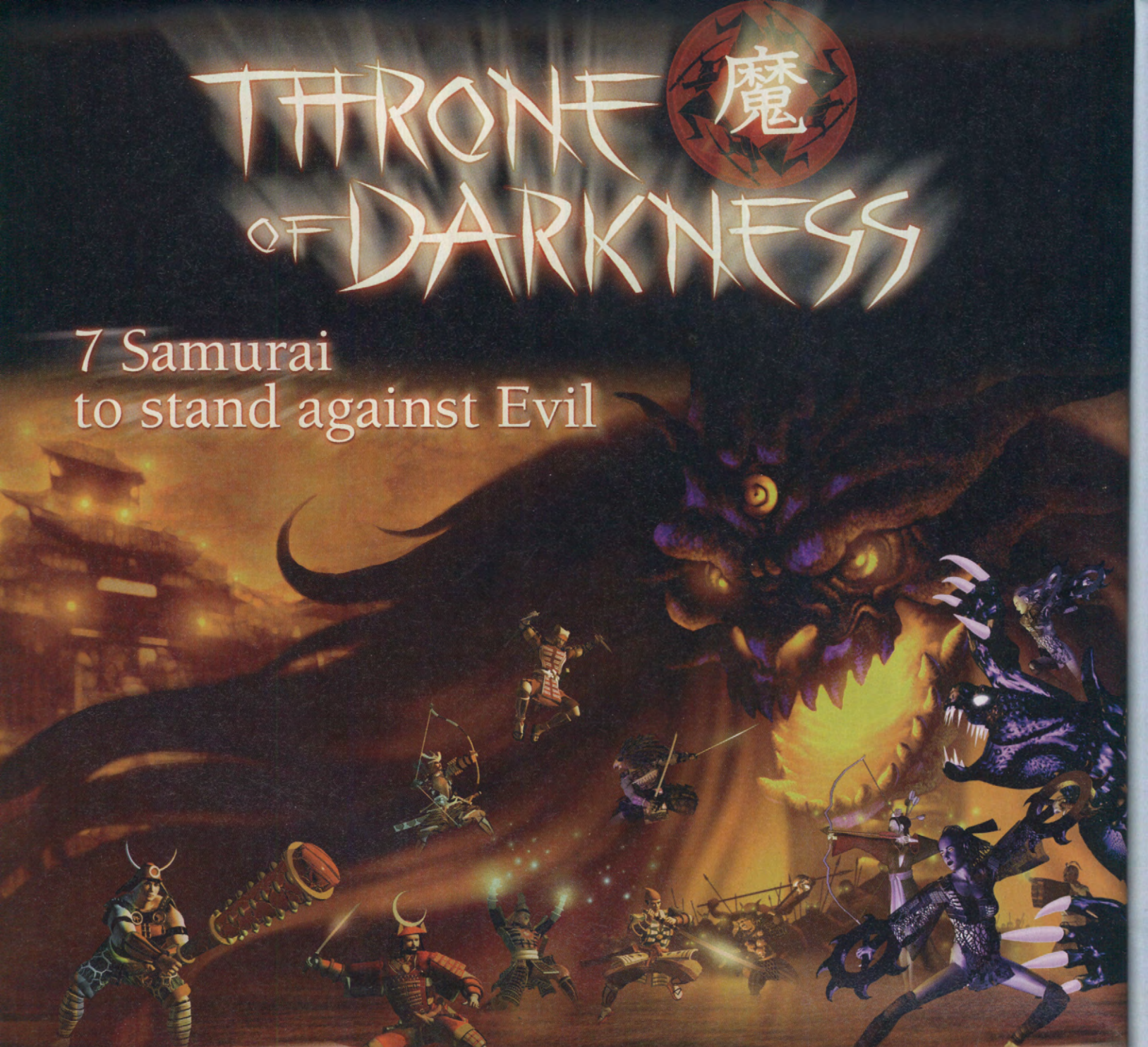
PREVIEWS

42 COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO
Young, free and single-player.
48 BATTLEFIELD 1942
More WWII death and destruction.
52 POOL OF RADIANCE
54 AQUANOX
56 EMPIRE EARTH
58 CIVILIZATION III
60 COMANCHE 4
62 BLACK & WHITE: CREATURE ISLE

WIN! THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: The Compo No One Finds (109), *PC ZONE*, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF. The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The editor's decision is final. Closing date: Wednesday November 14 2001. The winner of our October cover compo (issue 107) is Ryan Smith from St. Albans, who wins a lovely little something from the *ZONE* prize cupboard.

THRONE 魔 OF DARKNESS

7 Samurai to stand against Evil



Lead 7 distinct characters in various formation of 4 through ten huge environments inspired from Japanese mythology

Easy to handle and fast-paced action role-playing with innovative character AI and more than 30 commands to use against more than 20 varieties of creatures

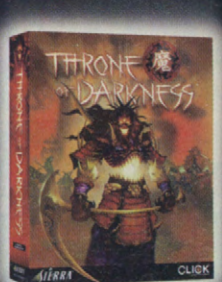
Original muli-player system allowing up to 8 simultaneous players online

"Bloody and Beautiful"
"A genuinely strategical RPG"

PC ZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

SIERRA
www.sierra-online.co.uk

CLICK entertainment



PC
CD-ROM

© 2001 Sierra On-Line, Inc. Sierra, the "S" logo. All rights reserved.

PCZONE
DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD
30 CLEVELAND STREET
LONDON W1P 5FF
TEL: 020 7907 6000
FAX: 020 7907 6020
EMAIL: letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk
WEBSITE: www.pczone.co.uk

RACING TOWARDS DEADLINE

Editor ..... Dave Woods 020 7907 6375
Deputy Editor ..... Richie Shoemaker 020 7907 6378
Managing Editor ..... Ruth Lindsay 020 7907 6371
Art Editor ..... Phil Clark 020 7907 6380
Reviews Editor ..... Martin Korda 020 7907 6379
News Editor ..... Anthony Holden 020 7907 6377
Section Editor ..... Rhianna Pratchett 020 7907 6376
Designers ..... Tim MacDonald, Jess Bennett, Reg Cox
Sub Editors ..... Vanessa Hards, Rosanna Negrotti
Writers ..... Mike Anderiesz, Chris Anderson, Daniel Emery, Steve Hill, James Lyon, Tony Lamb, Adam Phillips, Tim Ponting, Paul Presley, Keith Pullin, Charlotte Ricca, Phil Wand, Andrew Wright
Artwork and Imagery ... All Star Wars artwork, imagery and properties contained herein and on the cover, © Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM. All rights reserved. Used under authorisation.

EPU Manager ..... Sarah Gilliver 020 7907 6332
CD Producer ..... Alan Stonebridge 020 7907 6336
CD Editor ..... Matthew Cheshire 020 7907 6335
Senior Online Editor ..... Gareth Ramsay 020 7907 6815
Online Editor ..... Stuart Bishop 020 7907 6817
Origination ..... ColourFlow 020 7323 0022
Printed in England by ..... ET Heron
Distribution ..... Seymour Distribution

CHEERING THEM ON

Group Publisher ..... Duncan Tickell 020 7907 6352
Publisher ..... Tara Leathers 020 7907 6508
Consultant Creative Director ..... Vici MacDonald
Group Sales Director ..... Ian Westwood
Advertising Director ..... John Garewal 020 7907 6008
Leisure Group Ad Manager ..... Mandy Hewitt 020 7907 6670 adman.pczone@dennis.co.uk
Deputy Group Ad Manager ..... Richard Downey 020 7907 6671
Senior Sales Executive ..... Emily Ford 020 7907 6672
Group Classified Controller ..... Emma Regester 020 7907 6683
Classified Sales Executive ..... Beth Edwards 020 7907 6681
New Media Sales Manager ..... Pete Wootton 020 7907 6801
Digital Production Controller ..... Angela Thompson 020 7907 6061
Production Manager ..... Colin Robinson 020 7907 6053
Group Production Manager ..... Simon Maggs 020 7907 6051
List Rental Executive ..... Nerys Church 020 7907 6140
Direct Marketing Director ..... Julian Thorne
Newstrade Manager ..... Frzana Rehman 020 7907 6148
Research Director ..... Lesley Downey 020 7907 6110
Publishing Director ..... Christine Martin
Circulation & Marketing Services Director ..... Sean Farmer
Non-Executive Director ..... Dick Pountain
Financial Director ..... Ian Leggett
Managing Director ..... Alistair Ramsay
Chairman ..... Felix Dennis

SUBSCRIPTIONS HOTLINE:
01454 642 497 or email
pczone@cisubs.co.uk

BACK ISSUES: 01789 490215

NEXT ISSUE: PCZ #110
goes on sale Thursday, November 15.
Don't miss it!

PCZONE is published 13 times a year by Dennis Publishing Ltd. Company registered in England, number 1138891. Entire contents © Dennis Publishing Limited licensed by Felden PCZONE is pleased to recognise all copyrights. Wherever possible we have acknowledged the copyright holder. If we haven't, contact us and we'll happily correct any oversight. All letters are assumed to be for publication unless marked otherwise.

OVERSEAS LICENSING ENQUIRIES:
PCZONE is available for licensing overseas. For details contact International Licensing Director Kerin O'Connor: Tel +44 020 7907 6136; email licensedir@dennis.co.uk. For syndication enquiries contact International Licensing Manager Rob Willis: Tel +44 020 7907 6135; email license@dennis.co.uk.

PCZONE is licensed in the Benelux countries by Promotime Publications bv.
TEL +31 (0) 23 540 00 08
FAX +31 (0) 23 535 80 29

QUALITY JOURNALISM

It's a sad fact but whenever a tragedy occurs in the world there are elements of the gutter press that try to capitalise on the situation in a bid to sell their product. Take the recent atrocities in America. Within a day we were besieged by tabloid hacks who were keen for our opinions on a piece they were running concerning *Microsoft Flight Simulator*. It wasn't the fact that we weren't prepared to debate the issue (this is something that needs to be addressed in the future), it was the length the 'journalists' were prepared take the story in an effort to sensationalise it that shocked. More than our opinion, they wanted us to mock-up visuals for the story and recreate the fated flights, taking screenshots as we went so they could illustrate their stories. Needless to say we told them where to get off, but you can read more about the sorry situation in our back page comment.

Other games have suffered in the aftermath of the disaster and, in the knowledge that the events of September 11 aren't going to spell the end of what's likely to be a protracted conflict, certain other titles have been delayed or canned due to material that might give cause to offend. This is entirely correct – there are more important things than games at stake here, and the games industry has to make sure it does what's right.

"There are more important things than games at stake here, and the industry has to make sure it does what's right"

Elsewhere though, it's business as usual, and we're proud to have the world's first review of the best *Star Wars* strategy game to date. Powered by the *Age Of Empires* engine and using the whole of the *Star Wars* timeline as its backdrop, we knew *Galactic Battlegrounds* was going to be good. Find out how good by turning to page 66.

And speaking of good, games don't get much better than *Counter-Strike*, the online phenomenon that's taken the world by storm. A few months back we reported that Valve was working on a single-player version of the game, *Condition Zero*, and it's now been confirmed that Gearbox (developer of the superb *Half-Life* add-on, *Opposing Force*) has been given the job and redesigned the game from the ground up. We sent Martin over to America to get the low-down and he came back with an exclusive interview, loads of new screenshots and a head brimming with facts about the game no-one else knows about.

Enjoy the issue...

Dave Woods
Editor

As a publisher of magazines in Britain and the United States of America for 25 years, Dennis Publishing gives thanks for the safe deliverance of all its staff following the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

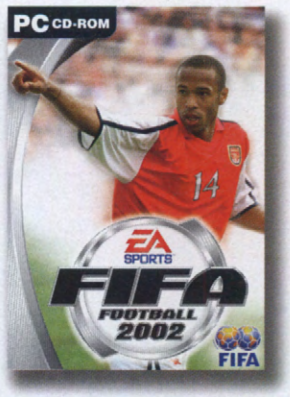
We extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to the families, friends, loved ones and colleagues of all those who lost their lives or were injured on that terrible day.

FIFA

PC CD-ROM

PlayStation 2

© 2001 Electronic Arts Inc. All rights reserved. Official FIFA licensed product. © 1977 FIFA TM. Manufactured under license by Electronic Arts Inc. © 2001 MLS. MLS, the MLS logo, Major League Soccer and MLS team identifications are proprietary rights of Major League Soccer LLC. All rights reserved. All sponsored products, company names, brand names and logos are the property of their respective owners. EA SPORTS™ is an Electronic Arts™ brand. PlayStation, the PlayStation logo and PlayStation 2 are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.



ARM RAISED, YOU CHARGE INTO SPACE UP FIELD.

BALL AT YOUR FEET YOU BEAT YOUR MARKER AND SEARCH FOR A TEAM-MATE.

AND SPLIT THE DEFENCE WIDE OPEN

WITH A PERFECTLY-WEIGHTED PRECISION PASS.

THE PITCH IS WILD. TAME IT.

EA SPORTS

it's in the game.

www.uk.ea.com

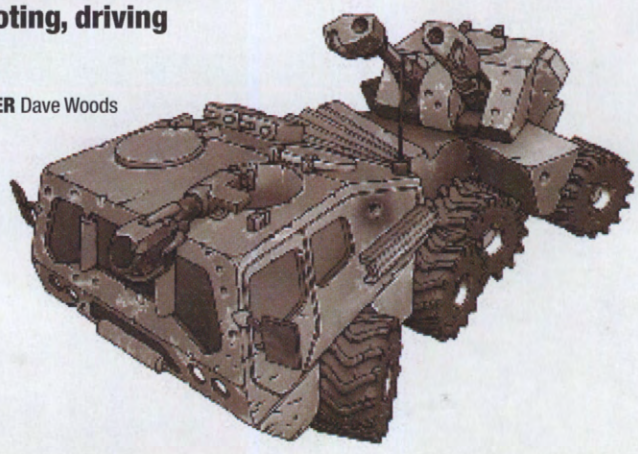
TOP STORY

Deathmatch on wheels

MOBILE FORCES

Strafing, shooting, driving and polluting

BACK-SEAT DRIVER Dave Woods



ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Rage Software
PUBLISHER Rage Software
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Spring 2002
WEBSITE www.rage.co.uk

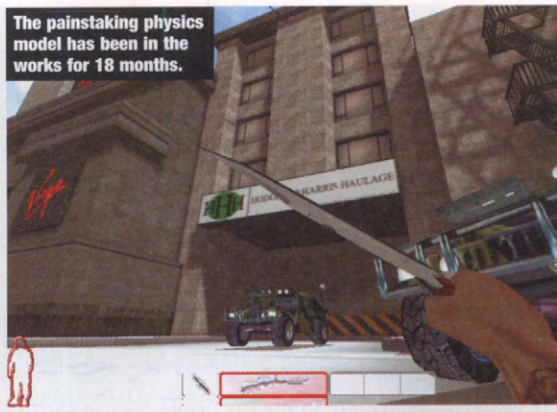
IN SUMMARY

Take the *Unreal Warfare* engine, make a selection of easy-to-control vehicles, add an assortment of real-world weapons and code some impressive AI so Billy-no-mates can play with bots in his bedroom. Then sit back and hope it takes off on the Internet as well.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

The world is crying out for team-based multiplayer games with bots intelligent enough to tie their own shoelaces. Rage has a pretty impressive back catalogue of great looking games, and their first foray into the FPS arena is well worth sitting up and taking notice of.

Environments range from mexican ranches and ice bases to this eerie dockland setting.



The painstaking physics model has been in the works for 18 months.

Rest assured, you'll be able to run people over.

When you hop in the driver's seat the perspective neatly switches to third person, though passengers retain a first-person view.

Deadeye the petrol cap for a satisfying result.

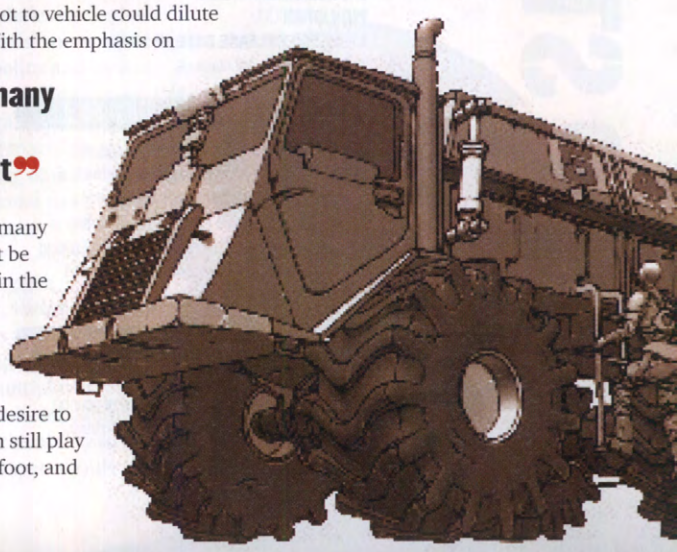
Counter-Strike might be the weapon of choice for most online combatants, but there's one thing it's never managed to get right in any of its incarnations and that's the inclusion of driveable vehicles. As the name suggests, *Mobile Forces* is the latest attempt to plug the gap, and, although it's a multiplayer game in essence, it's also going to include bots from the outset, which should assuage fears that it's little more than a mod, albeit with the lush graphics we've come to expect from the Liverpudlian developer. As always, it's being claimed that these are intelligent enough to jump into a vehicle while you're behind the wheel and provide the firepower, or act as your driver while you sit in the passenger seat and take pot shots at your opponents.

We saw the game running at the recent ECTS soirée, where we managed to drive the jeep (the only vehicle running in the demo) for a few minutes. This was enough to confirm that an impressive and complex physics model is in place, though with enough of a forgiving arcade leaning to get you round the maps without constantly getting stuck. What's more, you can shoot out tyres on vehicles, rendering them hard to control for a set amount of time and even take out the gas tank, which has the satisfying effect of taking the whole show skywards.

"With the emphasis on vehicles, too many players might be happy to get in the nearest Mini Metro and charge about"

While it seems that no story-based single-player mode will be offered, Rage has promised 12 distinctively styled levels each with unique objectives. The single-player game will require you to complete a variety of tasks and amass a certain number of points on each level in order to progress – Rage tells us to think *Tony Hawk's* rather than *Quake*. The eight types of game on offer will range from standard domination and CTF flavours to a promising Trailer Capture mode.

Due to ship in spring 2002, the team still has plenty of time to code the sort of AI needed to make the single-player experience work, but the game is going to make or break over Netplay. Concern here is that the switch of focus from foot to vehicle could dilute the action. With the emphasis on vehicles, too many players might be happy to get in the nearest Mini Metro and charge about without any desire to 'win'. You can still play the game on foot, and there's the usual array of weapons from the sniper rifle and machine gun to Laser Trip Bombs, but as was shown in *Counter-Strike*, if you put something with wheels in a game, most players want to sit in it. Or complain that they never get to go behind the wheel. Translating this into gameplay will be *Mobile Force*'s challenge.



TOP STORY

Flight of fancy...

PROJECT NOMADS

No man is an island

TAKING OFF Rhianna Pratchett

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Radon Labs
PUBLISHER CDV
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Q2 2002
WEBSITE www.radonlabs.de

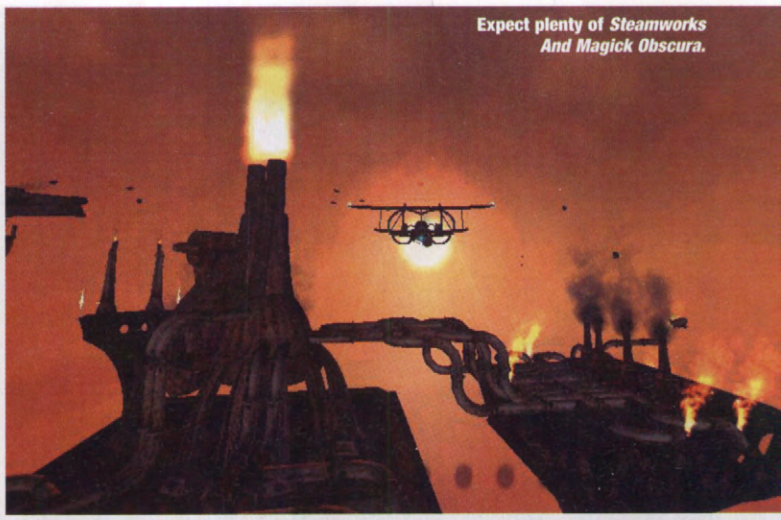
IN SUMMARY

It's a mixture of 3D action adventure and RTS involving huge, floating islands that are the last remnants of a battle-torn Earth. You control a wizard engineer whose job it is to gain control of the islands by collecting magical artifacts, fighting off aliens and building factories, defences and armies of flying machines.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Innovative action and strategy in a seemless 3D environment is one thing. The sheer joy of soaring from island to island in a beautiful, cloud-strewn world in the sky is another completely.

Just don't look down.



Expect plenty of *Steamworks And Magick Obscura.*

X marks our hotel.

You can jump into nearby planes and use them to break down enemy defences.

There's a particular method of flight we can only ever perfect in dreams. It's that way of leaping vertically up from the ground and embarking on a serene and unrestrained airborne ballet. After that the dream might get rather surreal in that you are pursued by kipper-wielding nuns or everything turns into avocados, but let's not get into the details of my subconscious.

"The islands are powered by a mixture of supernatural magic and Jules Verne-style technology"

It's just one of those things that us clumsy humans could never hope to achieve in reality, but Radon Labs's jaw-droppingly beautiful *Project Nomads* comes tantalizingly close.

It's easy to see why this remarkably distinctive sci-fi adventure/RTS won best PC game at ECTS, aside from there not being much in the way of competition. The setting is truly innovative, a world of giant floating islands, the only fragments of the world left after an intergalactic war with giant alien insects. In fact, it'll probably be the next Kevin Costner movie. Populated by the Earth's last survivors, the islands are powered by a mixture of supernatural magic and Jules Verne-style technology. You play a flying wizard engineer, using arcane powers and a collection of ancient artifacts that turn your flying island into a mean, green fighting machine, with the eventual aim of taking over other islands in the battle for solid ground.

The islands can be reinforced with factories, power plants and various defence systems, as well as being customised with flowers, trees, maybe even shrubbery... with a path (a path!). Basically it becomes your own floating, killing Garden of Eden. A real-time day/night cycle, along with changing weather conditions such as wind and lightning, add to the all-round beauty of the game, which looks set to rival *Black & White* in the 'wow' department. You could say it's the game *Sacrifice* should have been.

The skies around the islands are your battleground, and in the distance rival islands drift like sunbathing whales through the billowing clouds, surrounded by buzzing zeppelins and biplanes. Once you gain sufficient technology you too can gain control of such bizarre flying machines, taking a rest from flying under your own steam to do some real damage.

The developers are promising to create a seamless, organic environment, with no loading time between areas, thereby creating a hugely accessible world. The multiplayer aspect also looks intriguing, and features the ability to take your single-player islands online, enabling you to embark on some inter-island warfare.

Jules Verne had it right when he said, "Anything one man can imagine, other men can make real," and with *Project Nomads* Radon Labs is defiantly trying to make the stuff of dreams and wild imaginations a reality. Apart from the nuns and avocados, of course. PM

TOP STORY

Ukraine in the membrane

OBLIVION LOST

Going from strength to strength

TEAM KILLER Anthony Holden

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

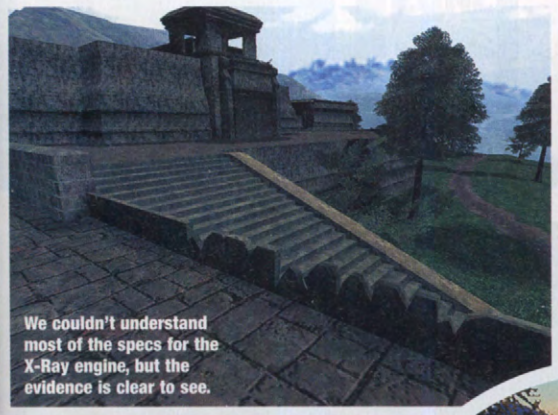
DEVELOPER GSC Game World
PUBLISHER TBC
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE 2003
WEBSITE www.gsc-game.com

IN SUMMARY

It's a futuristic team-based shooter from the makers of *Cossacks* and *Codename Outbreak*, offering a generous selection of weapons, usable vehicles and multiplayer options. *Oblivion Lost* is based on their new in-house engine X-Ray, and although it's still in its early stages, it already looks rather delightful.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

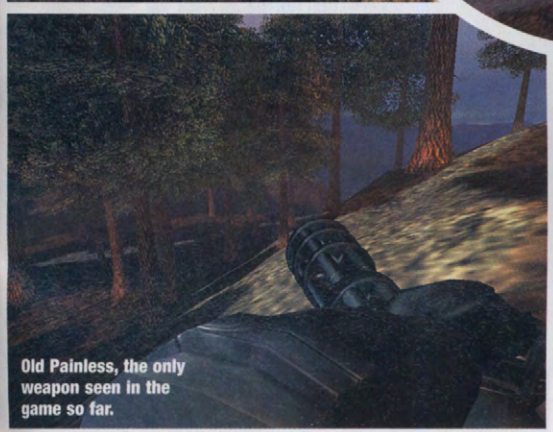
Two games, two Awards For Excellence. It can't be a coincidence, and it's made GSC Game World the official *PC ZONE* Ukrainian codeshop of the year, or it would have if we had one. A squad-based FPS doesn't sound like the most original concept, but GSC has proven skilled at putting a new twist on old formula.



We couldn't understand most of the specs for the X-Ray engine, but the evidence is clear to see.

These post-ECTS screens are as fresh as the morning dew.

The architectural level of detail is looking stunning.



Old Painless, the only weapon seen in the game so far.

Several powerful corporations will be competing for control of the new worlds.

The explosion of raw coding talent from former Eastern Bloc states is a trend we're quite fond of pointing out here at *ZONE*, and one that has already spewed forth many of the year's most enjoyable games. While innovation is generally not their strongest suit, the new flock of European development companies have proven themselves more than capable of producing solid genre outings with a refreshing depth of gameplay.

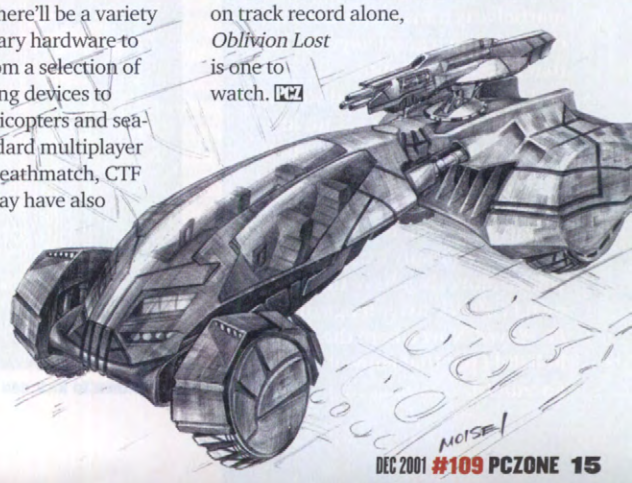
As you can probably guess, Ukrainian developer GSC Game World is one of our favourite examples. With *Cossacks* and *Codename Outbreak*, they've given us two of the year's finest outings in two very different genres, both of which surprised us with a raft of well-implemented features that belied their 'me-too' facade. Consequently, when the first images of their latest project flashed up on a *ZONE* monitor, there was an uncharacteristic flurry of motion among the normally comatose editorial staff. We were not to be disappointed by what we saw.

"As you would hope, there will be a variety of near-future military hardware to employ"

Initially revealed at ECTS in the guise of a tech demo, GSC has since revealed that what we saw was in fact its next game, currently going under the name *Oblivion Lost*. It's a squad-based first-person action affair, offering advanced team management that should build on the skills learned with the excellent wingman system seen in *Codename Outbreak*. Set in a not too distant future in which the discovery of mysterious travel portals has opened a new age of exploration and discovery, you'll take the role of a specialist operative in a team of heavily armed new world pathfinders. Each level will open up a distinctive new realm with unique flora and fauna, and, needless to say, they won't always be entirely affable. The potential also clearly exists for each world to have its own unique physics and gravity, but GSC was not to be drawn on this possibility.

As you'd hope, there'll be a variety of near-future military hardware to employ, ranging from a selection of projectile discharging devices to vehicles such as helicopters and sea-going vessels. Standard multiplayer options including deathmatch, CTF and co-operative play have also been promised.

At this early stage of development, the most impressive thing about the game is GSC's new proprietary X-Ray engine. Equally capable of rendering inside spaces and vast outdoor environments, as well as allowing seamless transitions between the two, X-Ray boasts impressive dynamic lighting and shadow effects, skeletal animation, and exact hit calculation for bullet collisions. If none of that floats your boat, how about accurately modelled hearing and sight for opposing units. Still not fussed? Well, just take our word for it – based on track record alone, *Oblivion Lost* is one to watch. PZ



BULLETIN

An ideal world

NEWS EDITOR Anthony Holden

Over the past few weeks I've read and heard a number of things that have genuinely held me in disbelief. In the course of researching the first of our new regional focus features on the state of the games industry in Korea (starting on page 26), I was truly stunned by the statistics and their implications for gaming. Here's a country where games are accepted by the whole of society and given credence as a valid form of entertainment even by mainstream media. The Korean government actively promotes gaming as a healthy stimulus for the country's youth. People of all ages and sexes play games religiously, RTS tournaments are screened on TV alongside traditional spectator sports and online lives are deemed an acceptable adjunct to real-life activities.

Meanwhile, here I am in London, making excuses for my pastime, constantly fending off arguments from my blinkered flatmates that games are mindless and for kids. When I meet a girl in a bar and they ask me what I do, I just mumble 'journalist' and quickly move on to another subject before they detect the dirty whiff of games about me. Of course blathering on about animé, math rock and martial arts films rarely does my chances much good anyway, but that's beside the point.

The thing is, this ideal society we're always talking about, in which games will sit alongside cinema as a media form that can be art as well as entertainment, politically salient as well as kids' fodder – it already exists. And what's more they have their own *PC ZONE* sister magazine, *PC Player*. Now where the hell did I put that copy of *Korean For Dummies*...?

Such a lovely engine deserves a sequel.

The mentalist returns...

Sam's back for a repeat performance in *Serious Sam: The Second Encounter*

When *Serious Sam* was released with a sub-heading 'The First Encounter' and an ending that said 'to be continued' we were entirely convinced that that was that, so you couldn't even begin to imagine our surprise when Take 2 announced that Croteam was hard at work polishing *Serious Sam: The Second Encounter*. Apparently, after destroying the Mental forces in Egypt, the sequel starts with you crash-landing a spaceship on Earth in a bid to track down chief Mental himself and rid the world of blah, blah, blah.

The seriously fun co-operative multiplayer mode is going to make a reappearance in the sequel, but Croteam is also keen to point out that standard multiplayer modes (which were woefully underfunded in *The First Encounter*) are going to receive a bit more spit and polish courtesy of A Few Loose Screws (the people responsible for the *Seriously Warped Deathmatch* mod). Expect to see support for up to 16 players across six different multiplayer modes and over 20 specialised maps, along with the strange split-screen support that was present in the first box.

The 12 single-player levels are spread over three new worlds, South America (*I'm sure I've heard of that before – Ed*), Babylon and The Medieval Age. The engine's going to stay the same, but you will get to sample three brand new weapons and more of the team's crazed adversaries.

Cynics might say both episodes could have been released together as a full-price offering, but as with the first title, the Americans can expect to snap it up at a bargain US$19.99, which should obviously translate to a sub-£15 price tap over here. In the real world you can probably expect to pay the same grossly inflated £34.99 the first episode was strangled with. We wait with bated breath.

Croteam • ETA Christmas • www.croteam.com

The old-skool mayhem continues.

It's time to kick ass and chew bubble gum.

A few familiar faces will appear.

THE PCZONE CHARTS

Read 'em, love 'em, win 'em

P.22

EMULATION ZONE

Head online with Kaillera

P.32

MAN WHO KNOWS

It's all too easy in this dirty industry

P.34

HOTSHOTS

Breath-taking *Unreal 2* pics

P.36

Take a deep breath of 02

Outcast returns from exile with the first glimpse of *The Lost Paradise*

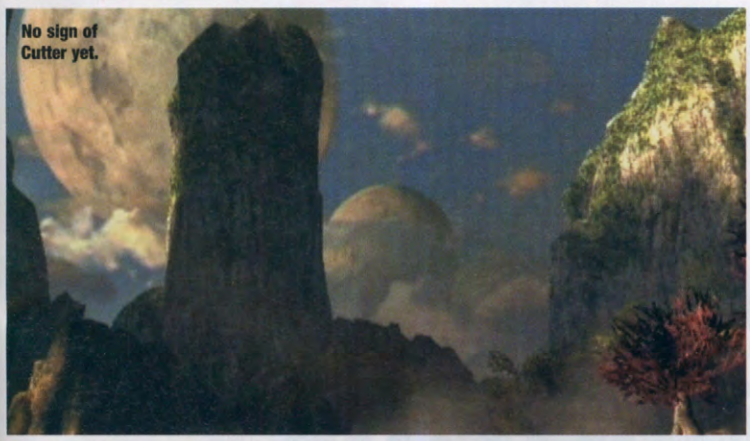
One of the frustrating quirks of the videogame industry is that differences in critical opinion are rarely recognised as valid by the gaming community. A game either rocks or sucks, and anyone whose estimation of a game differs from the dominant view is just plain wrong, not to mention a lamer, fagboy and/or gaylord. Occasionally a game comes along that genuinely splits opinion, and no definitive majority judgment can be determined. Often these games are the most interesting, and one such game was Appeal's 1999 action/adventure epic *Outcast*.

While *PC ZONE* was famously harsh on the game, we still have plenty of respect for its ambition and unusually solid narrative structure. Despite an equally restrained reception at retail, Belgian developer Appeal began work on a sequel to *Outcast* some time ago, and has now given us our first look at the game with these early screenshots. It's been dubbed *Outcast 2: The Lost Paradise*, and we must say we're quietly impressed.

The sequel will once again put you in the role of Cutter Slade, diplomat, fighter and all-round man of action. You've received an urgent distress call from your tree-hugging friends the Talan, wishing you to return to the green planet of Adelpha and save them from some high-tech alien aggressors. Stepping into a world beset by conflict, it's up to you to unmask a deep-rooted conspiracy and save the planet.

The survival adventure style of the first game is to be retained, the main difference lying in the technology behind the game. Gone are blurry voxels, replaced by a cutting-edge and highly versatile proprietary engine. The Himalaya engine boasts features such as accurate skeletal animation and realistic facial animation, complex indoor and outdoor environments, and advanced AI giving every NPC a mind model with customisable decision making parameters. Sounds fair to us, and we'll be taking a closer look at the game soon.

Appeal • ETA 2003 • www.appeal.be



No sign of Cutter yet.

We're told these are un-retouched, in-engine shots.

McRae shifts into third

The next *Colin McCrae* episode is announced amid tantalising promises

A good year after its release, *Colin McRae Rally 2.0* is still widely accepted as the unassailable benchmark for offroad racing games. Whether this is testament to the quality of the series or a damning reflection of the industry as a whole is open to debate, but given the game's astonishingly well-balanced gameplay and addictive learning curve, we're happy enough to assume the former.

The thing of which there was never any doubt of course, was that Codemasters was working on a further entry in the franchise, and now it's official. The world's finest rally driving series is getting a third instalment, to appear in the latter part of next year.

While the first in-game screenshots are yet to appear, it seems that *Colin* is definitely not about to get stuck in a rut with this latest iteration. Where the second game aimed merely to build on the strengths of the first title, *Colin 3* is taking a slightly different route. Apparently it's all about personalising the rally experience, allowing you to truly grasp the feeling of being Colin McRae, working with co-driver Nicky Grist and the whole Ford rally team.

Exactly how such immersion will be achieved is only vaguely apparent at this stage, though with talk of recreating the "total experience of competing for Ford in a World Championship event" we can only assume that more 'off the track' action will be incorporated into the game. Planning race strategy with Nicky, dealing with management, signing sponsorship deals, tussling with hostile rivals and/or impressionable female fans – all these are possibilities, though whether or not Codemasters is going to be able to pull them off is another question.

This time you'll actually be Colin.

What we do know is that technically the game promises to raise the bar yet again for driving realism, with even more painstakingly modelled car physics and an advanced damage engine that allows panels to be dented, punctured or completely ripped off. More cars and tracks are a given, though Colin McRae's Ford Focus RS will, of course, remain the principal car.

While we are heartened at Codemasters' promise to bring something new to the genre, we remain speculative about what form it will take. Our trepidation is compounded by the fact that the Warwickshire developer has announced similar plans for its other big car franchise with *TOCA Race Driver*.

Needless to say we're on the case, and all will be revealed next issue.

Codemasters • ETA 2002 • www.codemasters.com

SHORTS

RED ALERT

While it's unlikely that anyone who enjoyed the brilliant *Operation Flashpoint* has exhausted the game yet, more is nonetheless on the way, in the form of *Operation Flashpoint: Red Hammer – The Soviet Campaign*. Available in boxed or download form for a reasonable £9.99, the expansion pack will offer you the chance to defect to the Russkies, with 20 new missions played from the other side of the cold war divide. This time you'll be Dimitri Lukin, a disgraced officer stripped of rank and thrown in with the grunts. You'll be able to claw your way back to respectability come Christmas.

WHO WANTS TO BE A CHAMP MAN?

Huddling round Dave's PC to play *The Weakest Link* may well be the most irritating experience we've had at *ZONE* this month, but one trivia game we might actually enjoy is Sports Interactive's forthcoming *Championship Manager Quiz*. Planned to hit around Christmas (when else?), it's a straightforward multiple choice quiz game with more than 11,000 footie-related questions, a *Millionaire*-style lifeline system and a variety of single and multiplayer modes. And you thought your life was trivial now...

I'M GOING (BACK) IN

While few details were available at the time of going to press, *PC ZONE* can finally confirm, after many months of rumours on the Net, the existence of a sequel to *Project IGI*. The game has been in development by the original *IGI* team at Innerloop Studios for some months, and we expect an official announcement and the first batch of images to pop up any time now. In the meantime, we can exclusively speculate that the game will continue the story from the first game, offer a variety of new weapons and gadgets, and probably some other stuff.

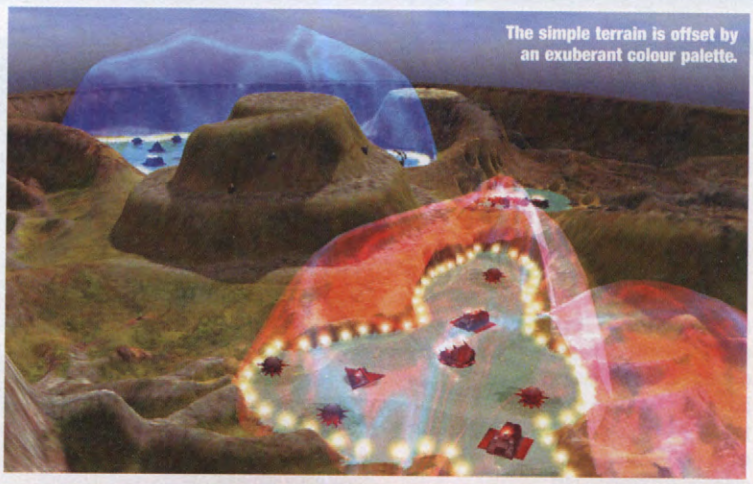
Breaking new ground

Deformable terrain alters the RTS playing field in *Perimeter*

Any of you who have dabbled with the many *RISK* clones available for PC will be no strangers to the concept of territorial control. Taking over sections of land and holding them has always been a compelling element in strategy games, and *Perimeter* appears to be no exception. The entire concept of the game is based on capturing key areas and surrounding them with a perimeter to prevent enemy invasion. Terraforming land also plays a big part in expanding your territories, and developers K-D Lab claim you will be 'charmed' as you watch the land changing in front of your eyes. This could make for some interesting tactics in multiplayer battles as players create new landscapes to hinder the progress of human opponents.

While territorial control and terraforming will certainly play a big part in ensuring *Perimeter* is not your run-of-the-mill RTS, the usual process of building huge armies and setting out to slaughter your opponents will still be present and correct. Players take control of three types of unit: Trust, who are responsible for terraforming and changing the world landscape; Congregation, responsible for building perimeters, and Legion, your military units, made up of both ground and air forces.

Visually, *Perimeter* is strikingly colourful yet quite minimal, but we imagine the kind of landscape deformation possible in this game has put limitations on graphical complexity. We'll be following the development of this intriguing little game with a great deal of interest.



The simple terrain is offset by an exuberant colour palette.

The unit design has a nice chunky aesthetic.

K-D Lab • ETA 2002 • www.kdlab.com/eng/projects

Headfirst into terror

Survival horror gets a taste of Lovecraft macabre in *Call of Cthulhu*

There's no doubt as to the appeal of survival horror. The continued success of games like *Resident Evil* on console formats is testament to the genre's popularity, but they have largely failed to capture the imagination of the PC gaming public. UK developer Headfirst hopes to change all that, with the imminent release of *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners Of The Earth*.

Significantly, the West Midlands developer is following the lead of *Clive Barker's Undying*, ditching the third-person viewpoint that has become almost synonymous to the genre and introducing a first-person view to woo the PC fraternity. They also hope to take full advantage of the chilling horror mythos created by master of the macabre HP Lovecraft.

We checked the game out at ECTS, and found it to be quite action-oriented, though Headfirst also promise plenty of genuine adventure elements to complement the more frenetic sections. *CoC* appears not dissimilar in style to the underrated *Undying*, with equally striking visuals and a suitably disturbing atmosphere.

Sharper graphics and loads of 'spine-chilling' sound effects will apparently feature in the finished game, as will diverse 1920s environments and the ability to pilot planes and travel in submarines and ships. A real-time physics system will allow players to affect the environment to a satisfying extent, paving the way for shattered windows and collapsing walls. We'll be bringing you a full preview in an upcoming issue.

Headfirst • ETA Q1 2002 • www.headfirst.co.uk

The graphics engine seems solid enough.

Let's hope the adventure elements are decent.

CoC hopes to stay faithful to Lovecraft lore.

Sun, sex and sand in the dingy confines of your unglamorous bedroom...

Last resort

Serious gaming takes a holiday with *Beach Life*

Just as the sun moves from our part of the world for another six months, Eidos has announced a new sim-type management game themed around beach resorts. In development at *Monopoly Tycoon* codeshop Deep Red, *Beach Life* will give you the chance to build and manage an 'Ibiza-like' holiday resort, and compete to create the most successful holiday experience for your punters. Following the classic *Theme Park* formula, you'll have to build hotels, bars and clubs, manage prices and set up activities such as water sports, para-sailing and beach parties. The game will apparently offer the freedom to determine the type of resort you want to build and the type of punter you want to attract, be it bloated middle-aged couples escaping from suburban reality or young hooligans on a drunken sexcapade.

Along with bad weather and bouts of food poisoning, we expect the usual selection of hazards to include abusive drunks, sand-chafed crotches and the occasional brown trout in the swimming pool. A recipe for entertainment if ever we've seen one.

Deep Red • ETA summer 2002 • www.eidos.com

Just renders at this stage...

...but expect a thorough makeover for the PC version.

Mini driver

PSone success leads to a PC release for *The Italian Job*

Pixelogic's recently released PSone outing *The Italian Job* may well be the last decent game to grace Sony's ancient console, and smartly enough the British developer has decided not to waste its efforts by releasing solely to a defunct console, announcing a re-worked version for the PC to appear in about six months' time.

Based on the classic British caper film, *The Italian Job* is a mission-based driving game that does a remarkable job of capturing the feel and humour of the source material, with excellent Michael Caine-esque voice-overs throughout and all the vehicles, locations and driving stunts you'd expect to find.

The PSone version received huge praise from the console press, with many favourable comparisons to the likable cops-and-robbers antics of *Driver*. Of course, only time will tell whether porting from an obsolete platform will be successful. It might be a right bit of tom tit.

Pixelogic • ETA Q2 2002 • www.pixelogic.co.uk

FastTrak Software Publishing

PLAY WITH MUSIC

MAGIX Music Maker 7

Self-made music, videos and websites! MAGIX music maker 7 offers simply everything for the perfect production. Every music style is catered for. Combine sound and video elements while adding effects, all via drag & drop!

SRP: £29.99

MAGIX Music Maker 7 deLuxe

Music. Video. Internet. - The deLuxe version offers many more extras for that professional touch with more flexibility and creativity. The ultimate music production suite!

SRP: £59.99

MAGIX Audio Cleaning Labs

Enjoy your music with a brand new quality. Records, Old Cassettes, Mp3 files and CDs - with MAGIX Audio Cleaning Lab everything will sound like new! Clear up your music rack and burn your own CD's in a sound quality that is absolutely perfect.

SRP: £19.99

MAGIX Video deLuxe

Bringing video creation to your fingertips! From professional digital recordings of your favourite movies to a quick home made video or high quality business presentation.... anything is possible!

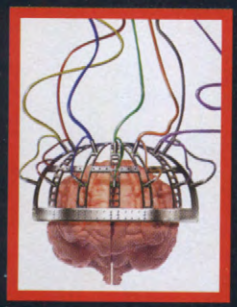
SRP: £29.99

To order click: www.fasttrak.co.uk
or call: 0800 056 1799 quoting: PCZM12_01

MAGIX see. hear. feel. create.

FastTrak Software Publishing Ltd.,
20 Greenhill Crescent,
Watford Business Park,
Watford, Herts. WD18 8JA.

electronics boutique
PC WORLD
amazon.co.uk



TECHHEAD

Windows XP detailed, Creative's new Audigy soundcards, and everything else

HARDWARE HAUPTMANN Carlos Ruiz

XP MARKS THE SPOT

Windows XP improves on the tried and tested formula yet again

After many years of slow progress through the various incarnations of Windows products aimed at home users, Microsoft has finally decided to bring the world's most popular operating system into the 21st century. Windows XP is clearly the biggest step forward in its field since Windows 95 spelled the end of the road for DOS.

Fittingly, XP is the one that finally takes the cold corpse of DOS and consigns it to the grave. Everything relating to the 'old skool' white-on-black text is effectively left behind in this version, making for greater stability in the majority of modern applications. Meanwhile, an all-new NTFS file system replaces the trusty FAT32 to provide a method of file storage with more capabilities, more security and more robustness.

XP combines the compatibility of Windows Me and the stability of 2000.

As you'd expect, XP is also more multimedia-friendly than its predecessors, and it's much easier to get your PC hooked up in a network thanks to numerous set-up wizards. There's even a built-in firewall to protect your data from malicious users while online. The obligatory new versions of Internet Explorer and Outlook Express feature useful additions such as improved cookie management and the ability to access your hotmail account in the Outlook interface.

There's a better version of the System Restore feature that made its debut in Windows ME, as well as a rollback system that'll allow you to seamlessly revert to old settings if your new beta drivers fail to deliver. Windows XP also includes strong warnings against installing drivers that haven't been certified by Microsoft itself first.

Unfortunately, it isn't all fun and balloons. The Product Activation anti-piracy system is sure to wind up a lot of people who install Windows XP, while conspiracy theories abound with suggestions that the built-in firewall could actually allow Microsoft to communicate with your subsystem, checking for pirated software and monitoring your surfing habits.

Then there's the fact that Microsoft is heading down the road where you have to pay extra for features that should be included free of charge, such as MP3 encoding and DVD playback. Of course we never expected a product of the Gates corporation to be perfect, but XP should be good for gamers in the long run – unless you're a serial pirate of course.

AUDIGY ADVANCES

Creative's latest SoundBlaster range leaves Live! standing

The massively successful Live! soundcards were released three whole years ago, and still stand up well against the majority of competition. Even so, Creative has been keeping itself busy, and a healthy set of improvements are now showcased in the new Audigy range.

For gaming, the key feature must be the latest environment effects engine, entitled EAX Advanced HD. This is essentially EAX3, and if Creative Labs is to be believed, support will be even greater than that for EAX2. Upcoming games should sound better and more real than before, as up to four sound environments can now be applied at once.

In addition, the new morphing process will mean smoother transitions between environments. There is even environment positioning, whereby effects will sound different depending on their whereabouts. And let's not forget environment reflections, which enable sounds to bounce off surfaces.

Other niceties include the ability to clean pops and clicks from MP3s and other audio files, Dolby Digital 5.1 decoding, and FireWire connectivity allowing you to link Audigy-equipped machines in a high-speed network. There are all manner of audiophile extras in the 'musician' versions of the card – the Platinum and Platinum eX – which differ in that the eX has an external connector interface, as opposed to the standard internal unit that occupies a drive bay.

The Player variant is the one all gamers should be after.

The Audigy Player is the European equivalent of the MP3+/X-Gamer models available in the States, which means that there is one less model available in the UK. Prices for the Player will be around the £100 mark, while the Platinums start at £200. If you feel like shelling out for an Audigy, you'll really need to have a multi-speaker set to hear the best of it. Otherwise, a Vortex 2-based soundcard may be a better bet.

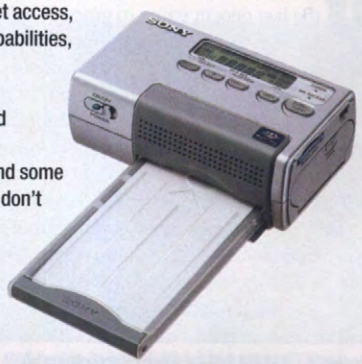
FACTCANNON

Napster's demise has triggered a wave of backing for other file-sharing systems – the most popular being the FastTrack network, which is accessible using the Morpheus, Kazaa and Grokster applications. These work like Napster but are even more capable, in that you can share not only MP3s but also a wide range of other file types, and resume broken downloads to boot. More on this subject next month.

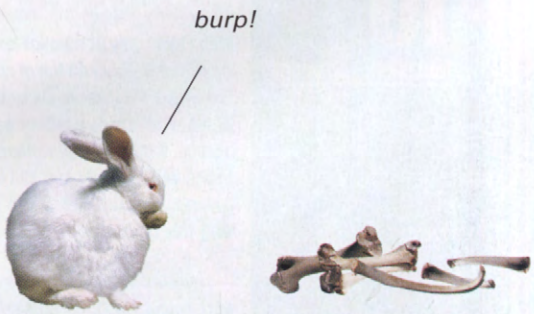
You'll be able to get instant results from any Memory Stick digital camera with Sony's new DPP-MP1 pocket-sized colour printer, due out in November. The device is approximately five inches wide by three inches deep, and in under two minutes, it can produce a photo-quality print sealed in a clear laminate. Or if you can't stretch to the £200 asking price, there's always the GameBoy Printer.

For the PC owner that always has to have the best of everything, enter the Lian-Li PC-65 USB tower case – the Ferrari of PC cases. Made of lightweight aluminium with smoothed edges, it keeps your components ultra cool and best of all, there's a plexi-glass side panel to display your Pentium4 2GHz chip/GeForce3 Ultra/SB Audigy card (delete as appropriate) to less fortunate friends.

Despite continuing official denials, a multitude of unofficial sources close to Microsoft are revealing that the software giant is currently working on an all-in-one broadband home entertainment unit, due for release in around two or three years' time. The device will reportedly cater for TiVo-esque TV functionality, fast Internet access, gaming capabilities, as well as television, movies, and music on demand. And some people still don't believe Bill Gates is going to take over the world.



SOUNDS BELIEVABLE.



SOUNDS UNBELIEVABLE.
NEW SOUND BLASTER® AUDIGY™

EAX ADVANCED HD
SB1394
DOLBY DIGITAL
ASIO

QUALITY - POWER - CONNECTIVITY.

PC audio just evolved. The new Sound Blaster® Audigy™ family from Creative® has arrived. The new audio algorithms will take your gaming and music making to new levels of realism and performance. Quite simply, the Creative Sound Blaster Audigy family of soundcards are the highest quality and the most powerful available and come with superfast connectivity between PCs via the SB1394™. www.creativeaudigy.com

CREATIVE

CHARTS

Everything you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload. Plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what's hot and what's not

Possibly the second best football management game currently available.

THE Virgin megastores TOP10

SEP	OCT	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
1	1	MAX PAYNE	REMEDY	TAKE 2	90%
NE	2	FA PREMIER LEAGUE MANAGER 2002	EA SPORTS	EA	61%
2	3	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 00/01	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
3	4	OPERATION FLASHPOINT	BOHEMIA INTERACTIVE	CODEMASTERS	90%
NE	5	MYST III: EXILE	PRESTO STUDIOS	UBI SOFT	35%
4	6	SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR/MONGOL INVASION	CREATIVE ASSEMBLY	EA	93%/83%
5	7	BALDUR'S GATE II/BG: THRONE OF BHAAL	BIOWARE	INTERPLAY	85%/82%
7	8	SIMCITY 3000 UK EDITION	MAXIS	EA	83%
9	9	BLACK & WHITE	LIONHEAD	EA	94%
10	10	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%

THE ChartTrack TOP10 ELSPA

SEP	OCT	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
NE	1	FA PREMIER LEAGUE MANAGER 2002	EA SPORTS	EA	61%
1	2	MAX PAYNE	REMEDY	TAKE 2	90%
NE	3	MYST III: EXILE	PRESTO STUDIOS	UBI SOFT	35%
2	4	OPERATION FLASHPOINT	BOHEMIA INTERACTIVE	CODEMASTERS	90%
3	5	THE SIMS: HOUSE PARTY	MAXIS	EA	50%
5	6	HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS	VALVE	VIVENDI	95%
4	7	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
RE	8	COSSACKS: EUROPEAN WARS	GSC	CDV	89%
9	9	THE SIMS: LIVIN' IT UP	MAXIS	EA	63%
RE	10	BLACK & WHITE	LIONHEAD	EA	95%

Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA

COMPETITION

WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

Once again, *PC ZONE* and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer the following simple question:

QUESTION: What's the name given to the distinctive slow-motion feature in Remedy's shooter *Max Payne*?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with *all* the information requested, to the address below.

- Please include your name, address, daytime phone number, email address, job title and company name (and age if under 18).
- Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies.
- Are you a current subscriber to *PC ZONE*?

Answers on a postcard to: *PC ZONE* Chart Compo (CPCZ12A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ. Closing date: Nov 15 2001

- Terms and conditions: winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

Max Payne only at number two! True it is very short, but it's packed full of quality all the way. The Max-FX engine really is amazing. I can't wait to see what it gets used for next – an FPS would be nice. Can't wait for *Wolfenstein* (test is good), *Halo* (I will throw a pie at Bill Gates myself if this doesn't come out on PC) and *Doom 3*, but that's a long way off, isn't it?

DaZ

Max Payne, *Op Flash*, *Half-Life* and *Black & White* are the only ones worth buying. *FA Premier League Manager* at number one is no surprise considering the usual crap which is normally found at the top spot.

Moving_Target

Myst III? Who buys that rubbish? How can there possibly be more boring old farts playing picture book games than there are real gamers playing stuff like *MechCommander 2*? I just don't get it. Is it because people who like *Myst* are simply not plugged-in enough to engage in software piracy, whereas hardcore gamers are often hardcore pirates too? That must be it I reckon.

FreQ

I bought *FA Premier League Manager* and it's rubbish. I should have waited for *Champ Man*.

ICkpu

Cossacks is back. I love that game – can't wait for the add-ons to come out. So much carnage on one little screen – those Russians sure know how to make a good war game. Furry hats, too – they know how to make a good furry hat. And vodka.

ChoaderBoy

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

Well, well. *FA Premier League*, eh? Couldn't wait for the new *Champ Man*, eh? It's even pushed *CM* out of the Top 10, something of a rare occurrence in the last five years. All the other chart stalwarts are present, though poor old *MechCommander 2* has disappeared, as has *Arcanum*. *Myst III* in third spot is practically a blessing when you consider fears it would sit at number one. Apart from that there's not much to get excited about here. *Cossacks* makes a welcome return, perhaps buoyed by imminent expansion packs. So too does *Black & White*, as sagely predicted by yours truly in last month's chart comment. Just goes to show, any idiot can forecast the simple-minded trends of consumerism given half a chance. Next month, I predict *Commandos 2* at number one. There.

Anthony Holden

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO

1. **AOE II: The Conquerors** *(Microsoft)*
2. **Voyager: Elite Force** *(Activision)*
3. **The Sims: Livin' It Up** *(EA)*
4. **Football Manager 2001** *(EA)*
5. **The Sims** *(EA)*

2 YEARS AGO

1. **Tiberian Sun** *(EA)*
2. **System Shock 2** *(EA)*
3. **Champ Man 3** *(Eidos)*
4. **Kingpin** *(Interplay)*
5. **Hidden & Dangerous** *(Take 2)*

5 YEARS AGO

1. **Rally Championship** *(Europress)*
2. **F1GP2** *(MicroProse)*
3. **Quake** *(GT)*
4. **Champ Man 96/97** *(Domark)*
5. **MechWarrior 2** *(MicroProse)*

THE ART OF MAGIC™

MAGIC & MAYHEM

- A rich, full 3D world awaits you.
- Master an arsenal of over 50 spells, including Meteor Shower, Judgement and Bloodlust.
- Summon and control 24 mythical creatures, including Storm Giants, Centaurs and Dragons.
- Single player campaign spans over 30 levels.
- Battle multiplayer over LAN or Internet.

Spellbinding Real-Time Sorcery & Strategy

ENDORSED BY RPGA

Virgin INTERactive

CLIMAX

www.art-of-magic.co.uk

© 2000, 2001 Virgin Interactive Entertainment Ltd. 'Magic & Mayhem: The Art of Magic' is a trademark of Virgin Interactive Entertainment (Europe) Ltd.
'Climax' and the Climax logo are the sole properties of Climax Group Ltd. All Rights Reserved.
Virgin is a registered trademark of Virgin Enterprises Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

PC CD ROM
Windows 95 & 98

FIRAXIS

INFOGRAMES

IN YOUR WORLD

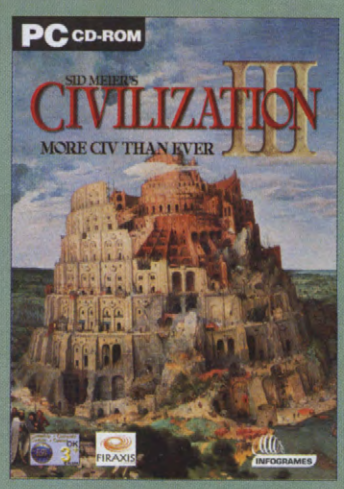
IS PROFIT THE PRIORITY?

4,000 BC 3,500 BC 3,000 BC 2,500 BC 2,000 BC 1,500 BC 1,000 BC 500 BC 0 500 AD 1,000 AD 1,500 AD 2,000 AD

CIV III requires the careful and efficient utilisation of natural resources, which can yield significant income and strategic advantage. To succeed you must master production, which if uncontrolled can be catastrophic, resulting in pollution, causing Global Warming and climate change.

Crucial economic and environmental decisions will be yours in CIV III - the game that tests your worldly judgement.

SID MEIER'S
CIVILIZATION III
MORE CIV THAN EVER



www.civ3.com

© 2001 Infogrames Interactive, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Sid Meier's Civilization®, are U.S. registered trademarks. Infogrames and the Infogrames logo are trademarks of Infogrames Entertainment. S.A. Firaxis Games is a registered trademark of Firaxis Games, Inc.

If it plays as good as it looks, we're in for a treat.

Homeworld eat your heart out. Possibly.

Intergalactic planetary

Lemon Interactive ups the ante for space RTS with the stunning *Starmageddon*

For reasons unknown, traditional real-time strategy games in space have not been as popular with developers as you might have expected. This may have contributed in some way to *Homeworld*'s overwhelming success, and Lemon Interactive is poised to follow suit with what we have to say is one of the best-looking RTS games we have seen in some time. Lemon says its main focus at this point is in creating a game that is as easy to get into as it is to play. Many parts of the interface will be familiar to people who have played other popular RTS games. They are also promising a deeply involving storyline that will immerse the player and complement the building, resource management, and combat elements in the game.

It all sounds good to us, and while comparisons with *Homeworld* are inevitable, Lemon is hoping to introduce innovative features such as complete freedom of camera movement – a first for this type of game.

In an apparent nod to the RPG genre, units will gain experience and increase in strength during battle. Experience points can also be distributed between missions to improve things like speed, armour and firepower.

Starmageddon features detailed psychology and social AI for the races in the game, which will hopefully mean computer opponents will behave in noticeably different ways. The game is due for release in October, although at the time of writing a UK publisher was yet to be confirmed. With the game looking this good, Lemon should have little trouble sorting out a deal.

ETA TBC • www.lemon-interactive.com

SHORTS

TELE-TRIBES

While online shooter *Tribes 2* hasn't quite enjoyed the stellar success it may have hoped for, its fan base is clearly deemed sufficiently large and loyal to justify a spin-off or two. Rest assured, we're not talking about another disastrous big screen videogame translation, but the rather more promising prospect of *Tribes: The Animated Series*. In development at fledgling LA-based multimedia outfit Cache Films, the animé-influenced series will follow the story of Naj, a smart-mouthed young officer in the Blood Eagle tribe, as he battles against the twin threats of high ping and witless team-killing newbies. Or was it the evil Starwolf tribe…? However, official sources at Sierra claim they have no knowledge of any such series, so perhaps this project will be shot down before it even gets off the ground.

PLAY FOR FREE AT THE PLAYING FIELDS

1 HOUR FREE WORTH £6

The PlayingFields DISCOUNT SLIP

Name .....Date Of Birth .....

Address.....

.....

Email Address .....

Tel No .....Date .....

This discount slip entitles one person to play for one hour free of charge on one occasion between October 18 and November 14, 2001, at The Playing Fields, 143 Whitfield Street, London W1. You must be 14 years of age or older in order to participate in this offer. The slip must be filled in correctly and must be the original from a copy of *PC ZONE*, otherwise it will not be valid. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Only one slip per reader per issue.

There's a bar to retire to when you get tired of fragging.

A gamer's paradise, The Playing Fields is a computer games bar where you can relax and play games the way they are meant to be played – with someone else. Just a 30-second walk away from Warren Street Tube station (Northern and Victoria lines), you can find it at 143 Whitfield Street, London W1.

Once there, you can jump on one of the 23 state-of-the-art machines on offer, and either play via a network or over the Net on games such as *Counter-Strike*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Giants*, *Delta Force: Land Warrior*, *Sacrifice*, *Rune* and many others. Each machine boasts an AMD 1.1GHz processor, 128Mb SDRAM, a 17in monitor and a NVIDIA Geforce 2 GTS graphics card – no less.

You have to be aged at least 14 to play and ID may be required. The Playing Fields is open seven days a week from noon to 11pm (10pm on Sundays). For prices and more information, check out www.theplayingfields.co.uk.

And for a free hour of play, simply fill in the slip (to the left of this page) and take it along with you to The Playing Fields.

한국 게임

The Korean Connection

In a land where (almost) every man, woman and child plays PC games, they must be making a few decent ones as well, right? *Anthony Holden* looks at the burgeoning games scene in South Korea

Let's start with the easy stuff. What's the world's biggest online game? *Counter-Strike*? *EverQuest*? According to Gamespy, there are around 5,000 servers running *Counter-Strike* at any one time. Even if they were all full, all at the same time, that would only amount to a 100,000 odd – 30 or 40 is a more reasonable assessment. *EverQuest* boasts around 350,000 registered users worldwide. Simultaneous connections have been known to peak at up to 82,000 during holidays, but the average number is around 70,000. Now let's put this in perspective. *Lineage: The Blood Pledge*, Korea's most popular online RPG, claims 12 million registered users in Korea alone.

Reflect on that for a second. South Korea is not a large country – it's about the size of the UK, and with around 48 million people its population is comparable as well. Twelve million people is a quarter of the population. Now admittedly that figure doesn't indicate active usership, but in May this year 2.3 million Koreans – about one in 20 – engaged in online *Lineage*, a fantasy MMORPG not dissimilar to *Ultima Online*. Simultaneous connections regularly top 100,000. And this is not to mention the 200-plus other online games regularly played in Korea, if not to quite the same endemic proportions.

"*Lineage: The Blood Pledge*, Korea's most popular online RPG, claims 12 million registered users in Korea alone – a quarter of the population"

PC gaming and online gaming in particular have become a national obsession in Korea in recent years, fuelled by a strongly pro-digital culture, cheap Net access and world-leading broadband penetration. In 1998 *Starcraft* was a major phenomenon in Korea, attracting millions of fans and stimulating the spread of PC gaming rooms, or PC Bahng, a bit like London's The Playing Fields. Offering T1 links for around 70p an hour, PC Bahng now number between 20 and 25,000, with another 1,000 opening every month. School kids – male and female – skip school or sleep through it to play *Lineage*, *Diablo II*, puzzle

ROGUE EXPANSIONEER

***Take Down* features local political issues and 23 real-life locations.**

They like *Rainbow Six* so much they made their own

After the eternally popular *Starcraft* series, the second most popular Western franchise in Korea is Red Storm's *Rainbow Six* series of tactical shooters. The local publisher for the series, Kama Digital Entertainment, is one of the top three publisher/developers in Korea, and has recently developed a stand-alone add-on for *Rainbow Six* designed specifically for a Korean audience.

***Rainbow Six: Take Down* was developed in full co-operation with Red Storm, and features 23 new missions set in well-known Korean locations. The expansion offers the addition of Korean chat support as well as a streamlined interface and planning stage. Die-hard Western fans of the series are clamouring for a conversion of the expansion, which from all reports is an elegant improvement on the original, but at this stage Red Storm do not seem overly keen. With the delayed release of *Rainbow Six: Black Thorn* in the wake of the US terrorist attacks, perhaps they will reconsider – the far-flung setting of this expansion might be just what the doctor ordered.**

Kama Digital Entertainment • ETA TBA • www.kama.co.kr

Tomak, one of the more bizarre offerings from Korea, sees you trying to seduce various women's heads in plant pots.

Lineage: The Blood Pledge, the world's most popular online game. Crowded isn't it?

games such as *Fortress* and any number of other games. And not just kids. Obsessive MMORPG players in their 30s and 40s are not uncommon. It makes our games market look positively pathetic.

A HEALTHY INTEREST IN GAMES

Part of the reason PCs and not consoles are so popular in Korea is that anti-Japanese sentiment has resulted in a long list of Japanese software and hardware being banned from import – the PSone was only lifted from the list in June last year. But the love of games in general is a little harder to pin down. Many psychological views have been forwarded, mostly along the lines that the freedom in games has great appeal in an otherwise rigid and formal society, or that the community element of online games appeals to the Korean group mentality.

More obviously, games are generally viewed as a good thing by the Korean government and society. Where we have to suffer inane comments from Prince Charlie about the deleterious effects of games, the Korean Ministry Of Culture And Science has the policy: 'play promotes health'. They fund national gaming tournaments and were involved in the establishment of the World Cyber Games. More progressive still, the Government has established the Korea Game Promotion Center, providing resources, funding and training for the industry.

Come On Baby: coming to an arcade near you. Maybe.

Korean development studios now number in the hundreds, but whereas up until now they have largely been concerned with servicing the domestic market, mostly with endless *Diablo* clones and a vast range of massively multiplayer offerings, they are now ready to move overseas. Some have already started to make inroads, others will find it difficult to cast off their uniquely Korean flavour.

IMMORTAL THEMES

Recognisable elements could pay dividends for *Karma: Immortality*

While most of the games we looked at in the course of putting this feature together would be met with raised eyebrows, fear and confusion by UK audiences, here is something we can all appreciate: squad-based military action. Sequel to the award-winning *Karma*, Dragonfly GF's *Karma: Immortality* is a third-person action/RPG set across two distinct historical settings. The first is WWII, where you take control of a squad of five elite Fallschirmjägers or German paratroopers. Such is the greatness of your prowess on the front line that eventually a malicious force targets your squad and plucks them from the battlefield one by one. Cue the second part of the game, this time the future, where the Immortal War is being waged, and the very same squad of elite soldiers find themselves mysteriously back together in a different theatre of war. Clearly there's some sort of cloning/Human Genome Project-type shenanigans going on, and the second part of the game sees you trying to uncover the conspiracy and rediscover your original identities. It's kind of *Universal Soldier* meets *Robocop* by way of *Metal Gear Solid* and it might just make a decent game. The graphics are a few steps back from the cutting edge, but the combination of frantic action, mission-based narrative and RPG-style character improvement seems solid. Individual and team-based deathmatch and co-operative multiplayer modes round off what could be a very likeable package.

Dragonfly GF • ETA January 2002 • www.dragonflygame.com

In the future, guns will be huge, apparently.

All the WWII weapons and vehicles have been thoroughly researched.

SEOUL SEARCHING

Where does that leave us? Graphically Korean developers are still catching up with the rest of the world, and relatively unpopular genres such as single-player shooters and horror games are only just beginning to be attempted. Online gaming is clearly where their strength lies, and Western developers could learn a great deal from their innovation in this area. *Lineage* itself has recently been launched in the US, to relaunch with more fanfare this November.

Essentially based on Western prototypes such as *Ultima Online*, *Lineage* offers only a few real twists on the MMORPG formula (such as territorial control and tax levying), yet has become the world's most popular online game. The real edge lies in the fact that NCSoft, the game's creator, launches a new episode every few months to keep interest high. Time will tell if ideas such as this are enough to woo Western gamers.

Puzzle and arcade games are also hugely popular in Korea, both online and off. The hilarious baby Olympics game *Come On Baby* for example, is already headed for worldwide arcades and hopefully PCs.

There are countless other titles in development in Korea with huge crossover potential. We've picked a mere handful of promising games for closer inspection, and though they may not convince you that Korea is to be the next superpower of the games industry, we strongly suspect that this trickle is soon to become a veritable monsoon. PZ

SEOUL SURVIVORS

White Day hopes to be the first Korean survival horror game to cross the language barrier

One of the new areas into which traditionally RPG-obsessed Korean developers are diversifying is the survival horror genre. Miraspace was possibly the first to venture into this realm with *Zaphie* and the forthcoming *Zaphie 2*, and now Seoul-based developer Sonnori is set to bring us its first-person horror outing, *White Day*. Sonnori is among the most successful developers of offline games in Korea, producing two of the nation's most popular single-player RPGs in *Arcturus* and *Astonishia*, and are more keen than most to push ahead into English language territories. The managing director and founder of the company, Li Won-Sool, is something of a personality in the industry, and was recently voted South Korea's most popular games developer.

Described as a 'psychic school survival game', *White Day* is set in a haunted high school, and offers a couple of daring innovations straight off the mark. Firstly, there are no weapons, indeed no way to fight back against the ghosts and other enemies in the game. While this obviously presents problems in terms of level of engagement, the logic is that being a totally helpless school kid, pursued by supernatural forces at every turn, has got to be more scary than being a heavily armed operative faced with a few slow-moving zombies. No arguments here.

In keeping with the nation's obsession with online gaming, *White Day* also breaks new ground with the inclusion of multiplayer functionality. Exactly how multiplayer survival horror will work waits to be seen, but just the thought of co-operative play in this environment is an exciting one. Not content with that, Sonnori is planning some sort of versus mode where players take on the roles of students, teachers and ghosts, the latter able to employ a variety of physical and spiritual attacks to scare the crap out of other players. Sounds interesting to say the least.

Set her hair on fire, that'll teach her.

This will be you after playing *White Day*, uniform included.

Sonnori • ETA Christmas • www.wzsoft.com/english/pd.html

GSC Game World © is a trademark of GSC Game World Co. Codename: Outbreak is a trademark of Virgin Interactive Entertainment Ltd. All images and logos other than the Virgin logo are trademarks of GSC Game World Co.
© 2001 Virgin Interactive Entertainment. Virgin is a registered trademark and the Virgin logo is a trademark of Virgin Enterprise Limited. All right reserved.

KOREA MOVES

Phantagram Interactive paves the way for Korean games

If the final product looks this good we're in for a treat.

Perhaps Korea's most successful developer/publisher outside of the massively multiplayer arena, Phantagram is certainly the most assured when it comes to exporting to the rest of the world. You might remember its first international hit, the unusual RTS *Kingdom Under Fire*, which received a mixed critical reception but scored healthy sales in more than 30 countries. An enhanced version of this greying title has just been released as *Kingdom Under Fire Gold*. But we're concerned more with its shiny new games, most notably *Strident* and the massively multiplayer *Shining Lore*.

Strident: The Shadow Front is a third-person action game set in the unstable political terrain of a post-World War III future. You play a female member of an elite UN strike force, FIST, and are blessed with superhuman strength and *Matrix*-like agility. Phantagram tell us to expect a simple arcade interface and plenty of shooting and high-kicking action, as well as a high degree of strategic interaction with the environment. The amazing CG trailer for this game has to be seen to be believed, and if it's even a remote indication of the direction the gameplay is going in then we can expect something special. Needless to say we'll be first in line for a hands-on preview some time next year.

The other big game in Phantagram's bag is the 'community RPG' *Shining Lore Online*. With its bright and colourful fantasy world, cute characters and wealth of mini-games, *Shining Lore* is in many ways a massively multiplayer version of a Japanese console RPG. However, Phantagram is putting the emphasis on fun and virtual life rather than powering up and item collection. Quests and real-time battling are available if you're so inclined, but you may just want to stay in town, chat with the neighbours and do some interior decorating. It's a conscious attempt to appeal to female gamers put off by the increasingly violent and competitive realm of MMO gaming, and one that will undoubtedly pay dividends. Of course a cute world full of Korean girls... no that wouldn't interest us one bit.

The other title that caught our eye at ECTS was cyberpunk action RPG *Duality*. It's the debut project for Trilobite Graphics, a Spanish start-up founded by 20 ex-members of Pyro (of *Commandos* fame). Though being produced under the umbrella of Phantagram, it's not strictly speaking a Korean development, so we'll be taking a separate look at this one in another issue.

Phantagram • www.phantagraminteractive.com

Don't want to kill anything today? Get a new haircut instead.

"The Best Serious Adventure Game in years" PC ZONE

THE MYSTERY OF THE DRUIDS

....end the ritual before it begins....

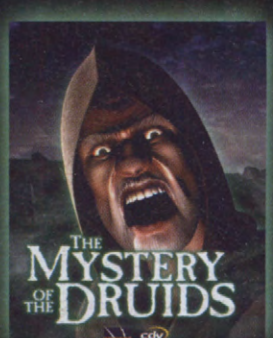
Things are never quite as they first appear! A simple case of murder turns out to be part of a sacred ritual, only now being completed... 1000 years after it began!

As the 'unsuspecting hero' & rookie Scotland Yard Detective, Brent Halligan, it's up to you to solve a series of disturbing murders. Assisted by a young female Anthropologist, you become entailed in a web of murder, forgotten secrets and world threatening desires. From the distant past to the modern day, the question is whether you can find the key to unlock this mystery?

"Mystery of the Druids has a satisfyingly EPIC storyline" - Gamesdomain

"Well-written and clever, it truly evokes the good ol' days of adventure gaming when quality was the norm." - Just Adventure

"Mystery of the Druids looks set to be the best pure adventure game since Escape From Monkey Island" - DiscWorld



- More than **50** impressive locations from the past & present
- More than **360** interactive scenes
- 3D Characters (up to 1,000 polygons)
- Hi-resolution 2D/3D graphics including UK locations
- More than **20** speaking characters
- Realistic lip synch dialogues
- **5 hours** of voice-overs
- Non linear dialogues and game play
- Extensive **real time** soundtrack
- SFX in **Dolby Surround Sound**

www.mysteryofthedruids.com www.cdv.de

HOUSE OF TALES

CDV Software, 337 Lee Valley Technopark, Ashley Road, London, N17 9LN 0208 880 4144

cdv

WAITING TO HAPPEN

Bronzed Adonis *Richie Shoemaker* finds a creative way to channel his hatred of exercise

GYMNAUSEUM

Here's a little-known fact that I hope Martin won't mind if I share with you. *PC ZONE*'s pony-tailed reviews editor can't make his elbows meet. Neither, of course, can Popeye The Sailor Man. That's because both of these fellows have immense forearms – in Popeye's case due to over-consumption of canned spinach, in Martin's case it's because unlike most games players, he works out.

Yes, you heard right, Martin 'Korda-Pounder' goes to the gym, three or four times a week, in fact. And he plays computer games. Sometimes all in the same day. Whether he would do both if he flipped burgers for a living is another question, but the simple fact is that among the *PC ZONE* crew we have an individual who can afford to stuff doughnuts down his throat and play computer games without fear of ending up a Billy Bunter, unlike myself.

Prepare yourself for another shocker. Anthony Holden pumps iron as well, usually with Martin. Whether they flick wet towels at each other in the shower is open to drunken speculation, but there you have it – two *PC ZONE* members regularly pump

"At my local gym there is a man, perhaps the hairiest on the planet, who blow-dries the hair between his arse cheeks"

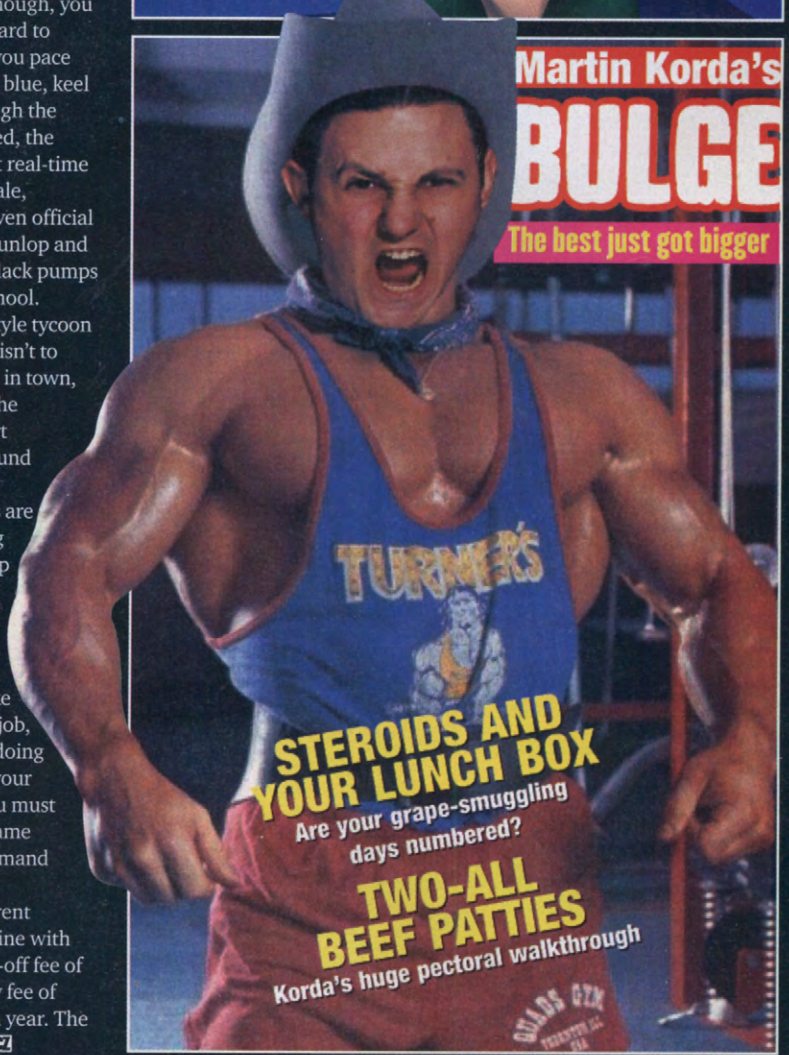
iron. Actually make that three. I go to the gym too, though by way of recompense I despise the place. If there is a more boring or more stomach-churning place on Earth, then I'd really like to know about it so I could plan my next holiday there.

At my local gym for instance, there is a man, perhaps the hairiest on the planet, who blow-dries the hair between his arse cheeks. He does this standing stark bollock naked, of course, in front of a full-length mirror. Quite frankly it's disgusting. Upstairs where all the gym equipment resides things are just as bad. There's always a couple of rutting stags puffing over the heaviest barbell, a fat sweaty bloke who's only really there because his doctor said he would die otherwise and on one of the exercise bikes in the corner, a slightly overweight and curiously handsome young man, motionless of course, watching Sky Sports with his headphones on. That'll be me. If not for the foxy Japanese chick by the water fountain and the fact that last night's sports results are being displayed on a couple of plasma screens, I probably wouldn't be there at all. As it is, however, I'm watching Michael Owen slip another one past Oliver Khan on the morning replay of England's famous victory, only to suddenly stop pedalling as the idea for a computer game arrives in my head.

Obviously based in a gym, the game would be similar to those sports games of old where you continuously pummelled away on a couple of keys. You choose a character of immense girth (the fatter the chap, the more difficult the game) and the aim is to lose weight in the shortest amount of time by going round the circuit, using each machine, lifting weights and running, cycling or rowing. The trick is, though, you can choose to thrash your keyboard to within an inch of its life, unless you pace yourself your character will turn blue, keel over and die of a coronary. Though the gameplay will be somewhat dated, the graphics will be fantastic. Expect real-time chubby wobbles on a massive scale, realistic death animations and even official endorsement from the likes of Dunlop and that company that make those black pumps we all had to wear in primary school.

Or how about a *Theme Park*-style tycoon game, in which the ultimate aim isn't to make money or run the best gym in town, but to surreptitiously run down the business. And it's all going to start with my game, where muscle-bound meatheads are crushed by 100kg weights and hairy-arsed baboons are electrocuted by faulty hair-drying products. People die, membership declines and eventually you're sacked. The aim of course is to eliminate as many people as possible before you're taken into custody. The clever part is to make it look as if you are doing a good job, while behind the scenes you are doing your utmost to destroy it. While your staff maintain the equipment, you must sneak around and sabotage it, blame accidents on your second-in-command and sack them.

I also envisage a slightly different payment method, something in line with real gym membership, like a one-off fee of £50 for the game, plus a monthly fee of £700 which you have to pay for a year. The game will include a free towel. PCZ



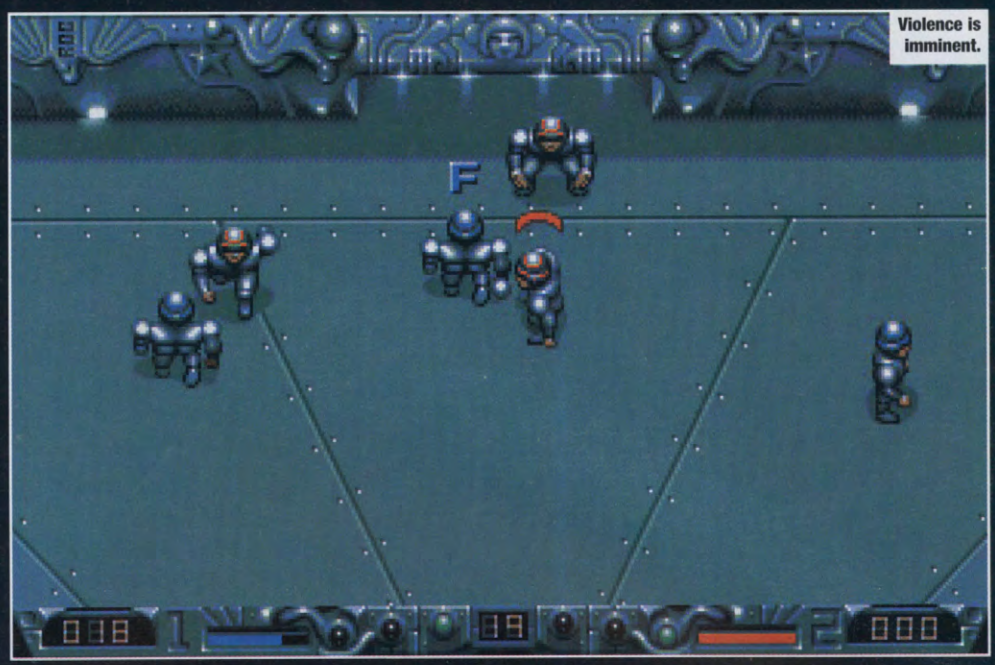
EMULATION ZONE

STUART CAMPBELL REPORTS FROM A WORLD WHERE NO PLATFORM IS OUT OF REACH

WORLD WIDE WARRIORS

This month's star program isn't actually an emulator at all. Which might, we grant you, seem like an embarrassing and elementary schoolboy mistake for Emulation Zone to be making. But belay your angry letters to the editor for a moment. Kaillera isn't an emulator itself, but it offers emu-lovers one of the most exciting developments yet in this most dynamic of communities. What it is, is a little nugget of code, which when embedded into various emulators (covering most arcade, computer and console platforms), enables players to participate in multiplayer games across the Net, ensuring you're never short of someone to whom you can stretch out the hand of international friendship and brotherhood by engaging them in a game of *Street Fighter II* and smashing their face in.

The technical details of the process are far too unpleasant to go into here, but all you need to know is that it's easy to use if you spend a minute or two reading the instructions, and that in most circumstances, your weedy little UK-gamer's 56K modem will provide a more than acceptably fast connection for even the zippiest of fighting games. You don't have to stick to fighting games, of course – any game with a multiplayer option in any of the supported emulators will work just as well – but they're by far the most popular genre in the fledgling Kaillera community, and several tournaments already exist in which players can compete for kudos and prizes. Even if you don't care about earning the respect of a load of international *Street Fighter* obsessives, though, it's still tough to surpass the simple thrill of firing up the Kaillera-enabled version of WinUAE and whomping all your mates at *Speedball 2* again.



Dhalsim and Adon attempt to convey, using mime, the concept of fighting someone from a long way away.

It looks like they've had a rather unfortunate misunderstanding.

LINKS

Kaillera homepage
www.kaillera.com

Kaillera Game Battles
http://cpsystems2turbo.emuun-lim.com/kgb/index.html

VISUAL PINBALL TABLE OF THE MONTH

This Bally bank-robbing table from 1996 will look familiar to alert readers, as it's the one we used to illustrate the process of building a Visual Pinball table in our feature in *PCZ* #106. It has only just been released, and it marks a couple of milestones in pinball development. Unusually, *Safe Cracker* doesn't give you the normal three balls to make your high score with, but operates to a time limit, with various playfield features allowing you to extend your time or pause the game's clock. Secondly, it brings the twin arcade staples of pinball and fruit machines closer together than any other game. In addition to the pinball playfield, *Safe Cracker* boasts a 'board game' on the machine's backglass, in which you gather points while being chased around the board by a computer-controlled security guard in exactly the same way as on the feature trail of many modern fruities. You could also – uniquely, as far as we know – actually physically win little collectible tokens from the table for beating the board game, which the VP table also simulates. Bless it.

LINKS

Visual Pinball Table Downloads
www.hippie.net/shivasite/vptables

Safe Cracker is more than just your average game of pinball.

PLAY THE WORLD'S FINEST CHAMPIONSHIP COURSES INCLUDING ST ANDREWS OLD COURSE, OAKMONT COUNTRY CLUB AND ROYAL MELBOURNE AS OFTEN AS YOU LIKE!

Tee up and experience the unmatched realism of the award-winning Microsoft® Links series with Links Championship Edition and Links LS Classic. Delivering accurate ball physics and photo-realistic graphics, Microsoft Links presents high-resolution landscapes that include bunkers with overhangs, sheer cliffs, smooth fairways and an unprecedented depth in game play. You can even join up with your friends in the Championship Edition - Links Country Club. Play stroke for stroke with some of the greatest players in the world such as Sergio Garcia and build your own challenging courses with the Arnold Palmer Course Designer.

Microsoft Links: **The ultimate golfing experience.**

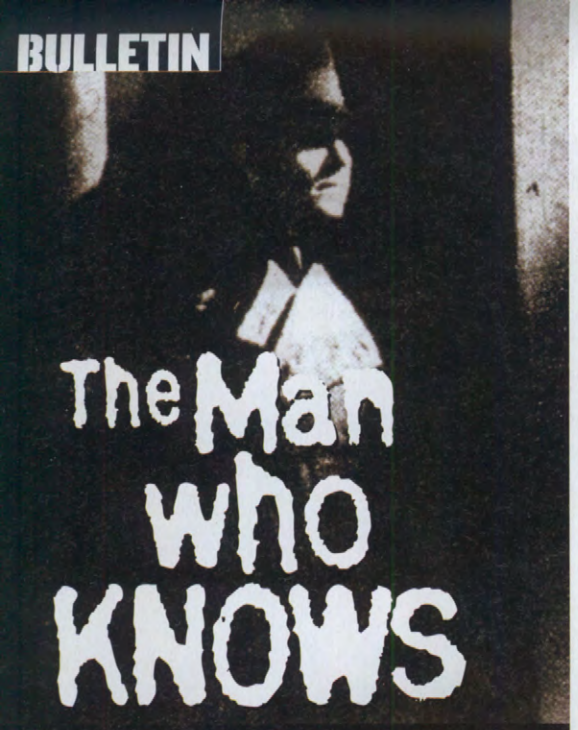
Anticipated street price: Links Classic £19.99 Links Championship Edition £34.99

Book your course now

www.links2001.co.uk

Microsoft®

© 2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft and the Microsoft logo are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the US and/or other countries.



The Man who KNOWS

WARZONE SPECIAL

The terrorist atrocities in **America** have impacted upon the games industry, forcing many publishers to reconsider their release schedules. The main brouhaha concerned ***Microsoft Flight Simulator***, with one sensationalist tabloid newspaper going as far as to suggest to its readership of spoon-fed imbeciles that the game could have been solely responsible for teaching the terrorists to fly, despite the fact that it has been proven they attended flying school. Other areas of the media picked up on the theory though, and ***PC ZONE*** received a call from radio station, **TalkSport**, who were looking to garner an expert opinion. Flight sim specialist **Paul Presley** was unavailable though, and is believed to have gone into hiding.

Microsoft countered the criticism by announcing: "*Microsoft Flight Simulator* has been sold at software retailers all over the world for years. Experts tell us it would have no relation to events in the US. It is highly inappropriate and speculative to say the terrorists may have used *Flight Simulator*. It is counter to what the investigators are saying, and is being circulated by the media. The purpose is to provide an entertaining and realistic game. It has to be realised that this is a game. It helps and supports people but will not teach them to fly. We will absolutely not be pulling the game off sale, we don't feel it's appropriate."

However, a mere 24 hours later, the game was removed from certain stores "as a mark of respect" and it is believed further versions will not feature realistic navigational data. Furthermore, Microsoft has pledged US$5million in cash and US$5million in software to the **United Ways of New York** crisis fund.

Another game to be affected is **JoWooD**'s unfortunately titled **World War III**, which has been put on hold despite an initial statement to the contrary. In the wake of the attacks, JoWooD's UK MD, **Vip Patel**, announced: "*World War III* has been in development for years, but you have to say the timing is uncanny. From the game's commercial point of view it couldn't have come at a better time. It's about as topical as you can get." An unfortunate statement to make some might think.

Westwood's ***Red Alert 2*** add-on, ***Yuri's Revenge***, has been postponed due to its box art, which shows the **World Trade Centre** on fire. **Activision**'s ***Spider-Man 2*** has been delayed as it features the titular webslinger swinging between skyscrapers in **New York**, and other games including **Ubi Soft**'s ***Rogue Spear: Black Thorn*** and **Digital Leisure**'s ***Crime Patrol*** have been put on ice due to their portrayal of the fight against terrorism.

There are also question marks over the future of **EA**'s online RPG ***Majestic***, in which players receive sinister phone calls from actors as part of the experience. It is thought there could be a similarity with the recorded calls of victims of the attack.

All of which begs the question: is the industry showing its inherently compassionate nature, or simply proving that it knows no shame when it comes to free publicity? You decide.

It's a labour of love by some dedicated *Thief* enthusiasts.

The expansion pack will be available as a free download from the Net. That's right, free!

Sneaky sequel

Can't wait for *Thief 3*? Help is at hand with *Shadows Of The Metal Age*

When Looking Glass Studios closed its doors in May last year *Thief* fans feared they'd sneaked down their last darkened street and hit their last unsuspecting guard with a rubber truncheon. However, to avert just this tragedy, a group of dedicated developers and artists from the Looking Glass community were brought together by their love of *Thief* to form the Dark Engineering Guild. Since then, of course, *Thief 3* has been announced, but the next big thing on the *Thief* calendar remains the Dark Engineering Guild's own *Thief II: Shadows Of The Metal Age*, an unofficial expansion/mod to *Thief II*. In the 13 new missions you'll be able to explore deadly swamps, abandoned hospitals and luxury hotels, with a variety of new weapons, enemies and other enhancements. Project co-ordinator Dave Johnson had this to say to us about his project, codenamed *T2X*: "People can expect all of the cool things – a unique main character, an intricate story, mission briefings and new AI – that make the *Thief* series what it is. I think that with all of the hard work and time that's gone into it, *T2X* is going to turn out to be very special." He even gave us these exclusive screenshots, the old charmer.

The Dark Engineering Guild • ETA TBA • www.ttlg.com/fmp

Apparently it will uncover "the evil within us all". Blimey.

Dungeon-crawling will feature heavily.

Dungeon caper

Dark Relic looks set to fill shortage of orcs and goblins

We're lying of course. There is no shortage of fantasy based games with an abundance of orcs and goblins. There is, however, a shortage of truly good ones. The creators of *Dark Relic* are attempting to put matters right with their 'third-person fantasy action RPG'. Given their own description of the project, we can reasonably expect a hectic click-fest in the style of *Diablo*, as opposed to the more strategic and ponderous approach displayed in games such as *Baldur's Gate*. Players will be invited to hack and slash their way through 30 levels of monsters, with traps in place to foil the unwary and puzzles that hinder progress. Depending on the depth of the puzzles (hopefully they won't be of the 'find key A to open door B' variety), *Dark Relic* may prove to be a tad more challenging than your normal every day hack-fest.

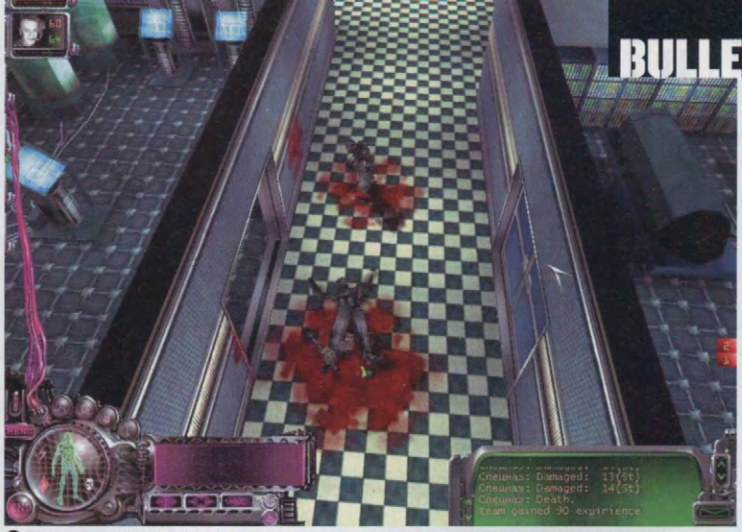
The game will feature indoor and outdoor areas, with cities, castles, crypts and dungeons providing variety to the landscape in the game, though most of the action will apparently take place in the dungeons. While this works well for titles like *Diablo*, repeated dungeon crawling can be a shade repetitive, and we're hopeful that the outdoor environments evident in the screenshot here will break the monotony of subterranean goblin-kicking.

Each of the game's levels will give the player a quest to complete, which will also be used to drive the storyline and trigger key cut-scenes.

The future of this title has been in jeopardy for much of the year following the unfortunate death of designer Rob Hilpert, but now that it's back on track we'll be sure to keep you posted on its progress.

Novus Delta • ETA TBA • www.novusdelta.com/darkrelic

Turn-based strategy games isn't our favourite genre, but this one looks darn nice.



The deformable environment should add a degree of satisfaction to proceedings.

X-Com paradigm hacked

Old-skool strategy gets a high-tech makeover in *Paradise Cracked*

In an idyllic future, no one will ever leave their PCs. With the all-knowing CyberBrain taking care of our needs, we will rarely stray from our entertainment stations, preferring to stay online in virtual chat rooms, playing games and occasionally strapping on the old teledildonic suit for a bit of force feedback fun with the graphically filtered partner of our choice. Or at least this is the version of paradise being peddled by Russian developer MiST Land in its upcoming tactical RPG, *Paradise Cracked*.

Clearly the developers have been reading too much B-grade cyberpunk, not to mention playing an awful lot of *X-Com* titles, as their game essentially hoses down some classic old-skool turn-based strategy and melds it with a Gibson-esque future of hackers, cyber-sex and dark conspiracies. You play one such hacker, who has inadvertently uncovered the details of a nasty social experiment instigated by the CyberBrain. In a series of non-linear missions it's up to you and your buddies to load up on guns and show the cybernetic oppressors who's boss.

Normally when we hear terms like 'turn-based strategy' and spot little hex grids on screenshots we're ready to run a mile, but *Paradise Cracked* is looking nice enough to give us pause. The game's fully 3D world has distinctive appeal, and the array of heavy duty weaponry on offer looks set to provide a satisfying show of high-tech firepower. Powering up with cyber-type implants and an RPG styled experience system also seems promising, as does an intelligent camera, realistic physics and a wide range of destructible environmental objects. This is definitely one not to turn your back on.

MiST Land • ETA Q2 2002 • www.buka.com/games/paradise

MISSING IN ACTION

These games are MIA. We make like Chuck Norris and track them down

Understandably, this title has been buried indefinitely.

KIA, not a term often associated with *The Sims*.

Expect *Black Thorn* to resurface some time next year.

WORLD WAR III: BLACK GOLD

Here's a classic case of too much reality. JoWooD were all ready to release this real-war styled RTS on October 12, and had already launched an extensive ad campaign selling the game on the merits of its authentic political issues, weapons and armies prior to the US terror attacks. One such ad even appeared in our own pages, for which we apologise, though it only became incredibly tasteless after we had rolled off the press. Subsequently, the game was, of course, delayed, in which state it will remain, indefinitely, until the threat of a real WWIII kicking off subsides a little.

Reality Pump • ETA TBA • www.realitypump.de

SIMSVILLE

The Sims is the biggest phenomenon in the games industry since *Pacman*... or at least *Pokémon*. Maxis was to continue expanding its vastly successful voyeurism sim with this title, sitting slightly uneasily between *The Sims* and *SimCity*. *SimsVille* was to give you the chance to build and manage your own suburban village, managing the needs of your Sims and creating a harmonious community, but Maxis recently made the decision to can the project. The game was clearly too closely positioned to *SimCity* as well as the other big Maxis project *The Sims Online*, which plans to bring suburban banality into the world of massively multiplayer.

Maxis • KIA • http://simsville.ea.com

ROGUE SPEAR: BLACK THORN

Another title to fall off release schedules subsequent to the New York attacks was this addition to the Tom Clancy series of tactical action games. The game was to pit you, as part of the Rainbow Six anti-terrorist outfit, against a ruthless a copycat terrorist group attempting to recreate the most atrocious acts of terror of the past century. Clearly this has now become a delicate area to be touching on, and Ubi Soft has decided, out of consideration, to drop this game into a deep dark hole until further notice. Whether it ever sees the light of day is anyone's guess.

Red Storm • ETA TBA • www.redstorm.com

HOTSHOTS

UNREAL 2

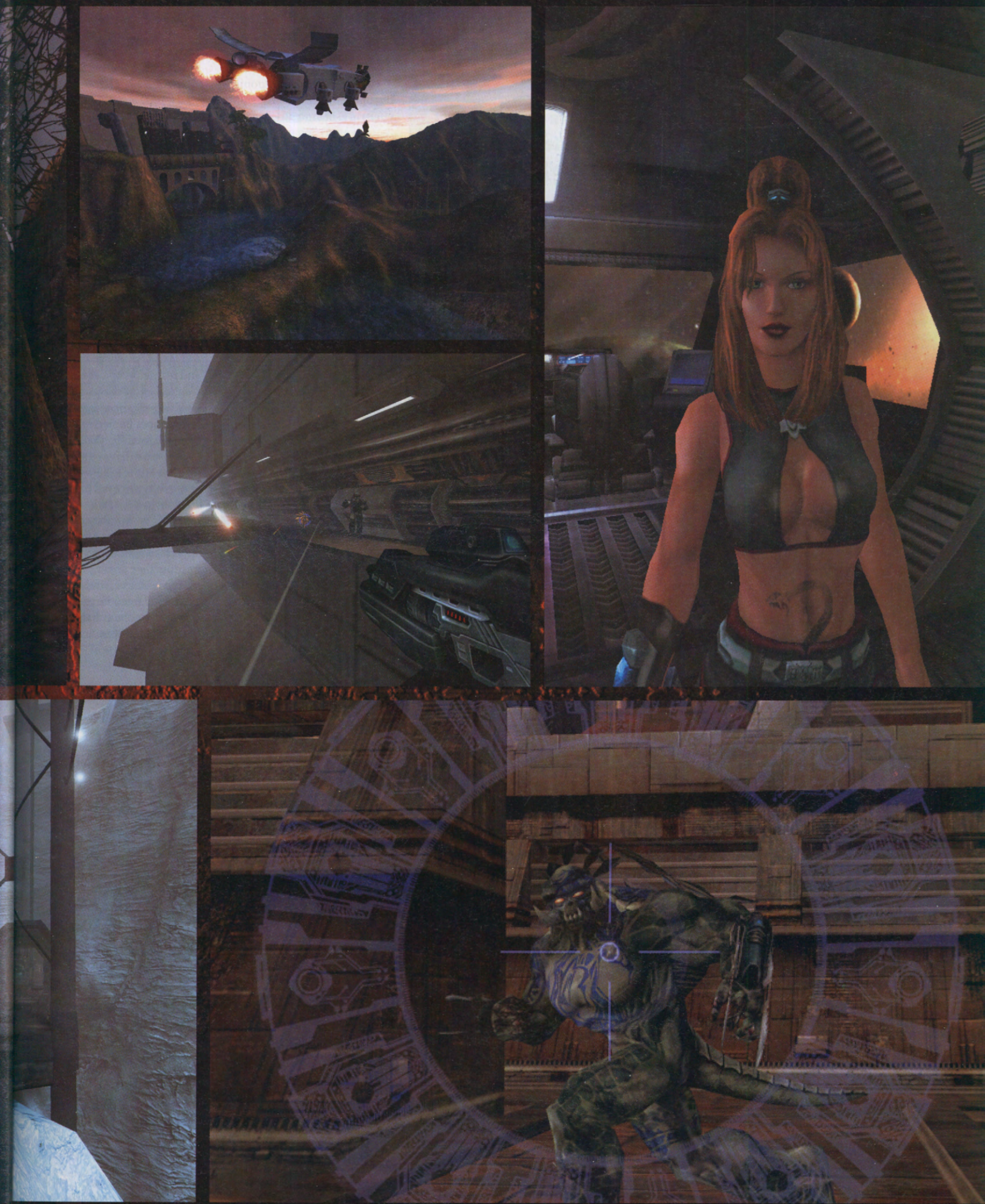
Possibly the most beautiful game ever

Whatever your leanings in the age-old 'my FPS is better than your FPS' dispute, there's no denying that the original *Unreal* was a truly lovely-looking game, powered by one of the most capable and enduring engines ever built. We never doubted, then, that *Unreal 2* was going to look rather pretty, but nothing prepared us for the almost wanton displays of visual splendour dished out in early screenshots. From tropical planetscapes to fantastic alien installations, the richness of the environments and sheer level of detail left us dumbfounded.

If you like number crunching, how about character models with ten times the polygons of the original game? Or level environments with a hundred times the polygons? It's all impressive stuff, and fortunately the gameplay looks set to match or even surpass this graphical extravagance. Superior AI and narrative depth, an advanced dialogue system for communicating with NPCs, innovative weapons like the 'leech gun' and mindclaw... the signs are all there for a new waypoint in FPS evolution.

Having suitably gobsmacked us all early on, these brand new screenshots are concerned more with showing gameplay in action, and give us the best look yet at some of the characters in the game – including your busty crewmate Aida, exclusive to *PC ZONE*.

Legend • ETA Q2 2002 • www.unreal2.com



MAILBOX

Go on, get it off your chest. If you have something to say, whether it's good, bad or indifferent, write to us and if it's interesting enough we'll print it

ANSWERED BY Dave Woods

CONTACT INFO

Write to us, and if your letter is selected as Letter Of The Month we'll send you a prize.

WRITE TO Mailbox, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at **www.pczone.co.uk** for further info.

SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON

***PC ZONE* is giving away not one, but two of these wonderful GameVoice contraptions from Microsoft to the writer of the Star Letter. If we don't consider any of the letters to be worthy we'll just keep them for ourselves. Using the GameVoice, you can communicate with other players online and give yourself a massive advantage over the Luddites who have to stop and type instructions. They're priced at £49.99 each and are worth every single penny.**

QUESTION TIME

It has to be said guys, *PC ZONE* is now the clear leader in the magazine market. Just a few questions:

1. Why don't you review more serious hardware? Like motherboards and so on? Go on, you know you want to.
2. Why does Steve Hill (in the photos at the beginning of Reviews section) look like he is being rogered?
3. Is Rhianna Pratchett a) Related to Terry? b) For real? c) Just used as a puppet to tantalise the raging hormones of young men lathered on a diet of Lara Croft? (Sorry love, those photos are just TOO dark and mysterious for me.)

JAPPO the C

1. We have a Recommended Hardware section that contains motherboards and other hardware, and over the next few months we'll be looking at the subject in more depth.
2. You don't want to know.
3. Yep, yep and yep.

GAME AND ABLE

I read your article on the disabled gamer (*PC ZONE* #108) with great interest as I am myself hard of hearing and can't hear anything without hearing aids. Yet I am an avid gamer and play *Counter-Strike* and *Team Fortress Classic* on a daily basis. I'm in a professional *TFC* clan and the increasing pressure of using voice communications within the game as part of the tactics is proving difficult for me. I can rarely pick up what people say without the aid of lip reading, not to mention those awkward muffled/half-drunk Scottish accents of my fellow clan members. I experienced *Half-Life* somewhat in a watered down manner, as there were no in-game subtitles and I feel this is an area that can be greatly improved in gaming.

With the move into real-time voice coms in online games I will be at a loss and unfairly pushed aside because of my difficulties. Therefore I urge developers to think about how to make this aspect of gaming more accessible to the many thousands of gamers in a similar position to me. I would also like to say "Keep up the good work" to all those at *PC ZONE* for providing us with a generally classy, funny and honest opinion on the current affairs of PC gaming.

Myles (Spud) de Bastion

Unfortunately, most publishers don't provide for gamers with disabilities.

WWW.HOAX.CO.UK

I've just received the last issue of your fabulous magazine and read about your new flash website. I quickly dropped the mag, turned on my PC and logged onto your site with feverish anticipation, only to see what looks like an identical copy of your old site.

I checked the cover date (it wasn't April 1) and went back to the site again. Call me stupid, but isn't it exactly the same? Where are all the new features?

Alex Tadburn

Last-minute fine-tuning meant it didn't go up as planned, but it's there now. And we wouldn't dream of calling you stupid...

I HAD A NIGHTMARE

I feel I have to respond to the letter from AZ (called 'I HAVE A DREAM #1). I truly hope the games industry doesn't listen to his rather strange suggestion... I don't want to play games with "Empty worlds and desolate universes". I enjoy games that have rich content, not only in graphics, sounds and music but also filled with interesting characters, plot and overall creative vision.

> **"I experienced *Half-Life* somewhat in a watered down manner, as there were no in-game subtitles"**
>
> **MYLES DE BASTION ON THE TROUBLES OF GAMING IF YOU'RE HARD OF HEARING**

What I love about *Deus Ex* is the superb story, locations and characters I actually cared about. For me the game engrossed me so much because of the "world" the very talented developers had created.

He continually tells the games industry to move on, then contradicts himself by telling them to forget about polygons, frames per second, lighting and destructible terrain. So we should stick with the *Half-Life* engine forever? Surely he realises that with improvements in those area's (among others) gameplay will also be improved, more polygons equals more complex environments.

Games have been linear and restrictive because of technology, developers would love to be able to create super immersive worlds that give total freedom within the universe they create. I'm sure Ion Storm's team would have given you even more freedom in *Deus Ex* if they were able to, but they can't, yet (although I was still very impressed with the level of freedom they accomplished).

The future of games is clear, total freedom to choose how you accomplish the tasks that the game presents, but not at the expense of great characters, environments and overall story.

Anyway, it seems that what AZ is really asking for... is simply a tool for him to make his own game, and I hate to break it to him, but those tools have been available to him for years now, they come free with many games. And what are these tools? Editors actually. So, stop ranting AZ and get editing. If you haven't the talent to do so, then that's your problem, don't blame developers.

James McWilliams

And when you've made your perfect game, send it into us and we'll stick it on our CD.

FOUR EYES

I would just like to start by saying your magazine is almost faultless. But, here is

where I dive into the small section of *ZONE* called the "Realm of the slightly flawed".

I just so happened to flick through issue 106, when I stumbled across your preview of *Sheep, Dog 'N' Wolf*. This I read thoroughly and found the text to my satisfaction. Next I came to the picture boxes. In one of these, in the top, right-hand corner of the double page, there is a screenshot of Ralph the wolf in the middle of a road. Underneath is the caption "No sheep, no dog and one wolf". However, it is quite obvious that, in fact, the dog is in the picture in the top left, leaning on something. I asked a few of my friends if they could spot it and all of them managed to in less than five seconds. Heck, even my kid brother succeeded in the task.

And another thing. On the same double page, there is a picture of the dog listening to the music of the flute that the wolf is playing. The caption to this picture is "And a hey nonny noo." If you are referring to the famous phrase shouted by Morris dancers, which indeed you are, the phrase is actually "Hey nonny no" (note the single "o" in "no"). In any case, the dog is in a trance-like state (ie not dancing), and Morris dancers come complete with sticks, bells and, of course, a maypole.

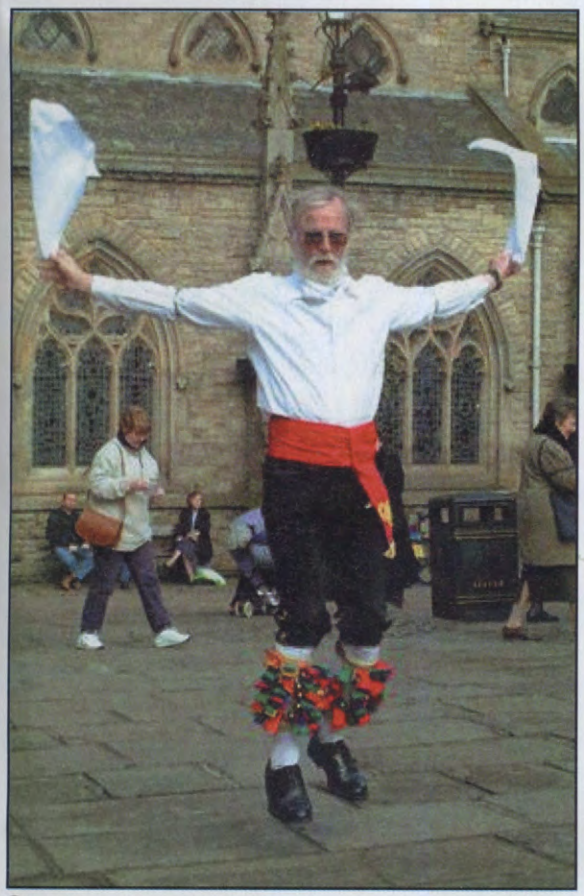
I hope that in future Mr Dave Woods might spend a little more time at his desk researching a bit about traditional English dancing and possibly considering a visit to his nearest Specsavers.

Matt Blackwell

"The dog is in a trance-like state (ie not dancing), and Morris dancers come with sticks, bells and, of course, a maypole"

MATT BLACKWELL SEEMS TO KNOW A BIT TOO MUCH ABOUT MORRIS DANCING

What you seem to fail to have realised is that we put these *deliberate* mistakes in to keep you occupied. How else would you manage to keep your friends and your kid brother entertained. You should be thanking us...



Tradition isn't necessarily a good thing.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

SELL OUT

This is a dangerous time for game reviewers and thus a dangerous time for consumers, as a result I feel the time has come to sound a rallying call to the people who are blessed with the role of providing reviews and critiques for gaming software.

There are four mainstream areas for mass media reviews, these are film, music, book and stage. Of these, only stage reviews still carry any form of leverage in their market place. The others are dominated by huge marketing budgets and a customer base that has foregone waiting for a published review and opted for tried and tested brands or recommendation from friends. Indeed a recent film survey found that less that five per cent of cinema customers gave any weight to a published review, while a staggering 43 per cent stated word of mouth by friends formed a major reason for visiting the cinema and parting with their hard earned cash.

Film reviewers can no longer make or break a project, the best they can hope for is to shed a little light on small independent films the mainstream fail to hear about. In this day and age of bigger players in the games industry (Microsoft, EA and Activision) we are finding more and more direct selling to customers and less reliance on magazines to get the message to the marketplace. Often games sell in huge numbers from shelves even when no published review is available to read, other games are just given a new number and rolled out to the same customers who seem to buy them out of a collector's habit rather than through critical judgement.

Game reviews are about to face their toughest challenge, budgets for games are increasing, companies are merging and franchises are starting to become the standard. If left unchecked then games review magazines will become nothing more that a useful read for people who have already made up their minds.

Worse still is the increasing move towards reviewing the month's big thing and desperately trying to get it splashed on the cover, mounted on the CD or reviewed in some form. Often these big exclusives are treated with more respect that a visit from the Pope, even when it's clear to any sensible soul that the game in question is far from fantastic.

I am still looking for a reviewer from the current crop who will honestly tell me what they like and dislike, one that highlights examples and offers improvements that could have been made. I firmly believe a decent well-written opinion with practical examples for improvement is the Holy Grail for a games reviewer. Some of your staff show signs of it from time to time, in fact, you're definitely the best of the current bunch.

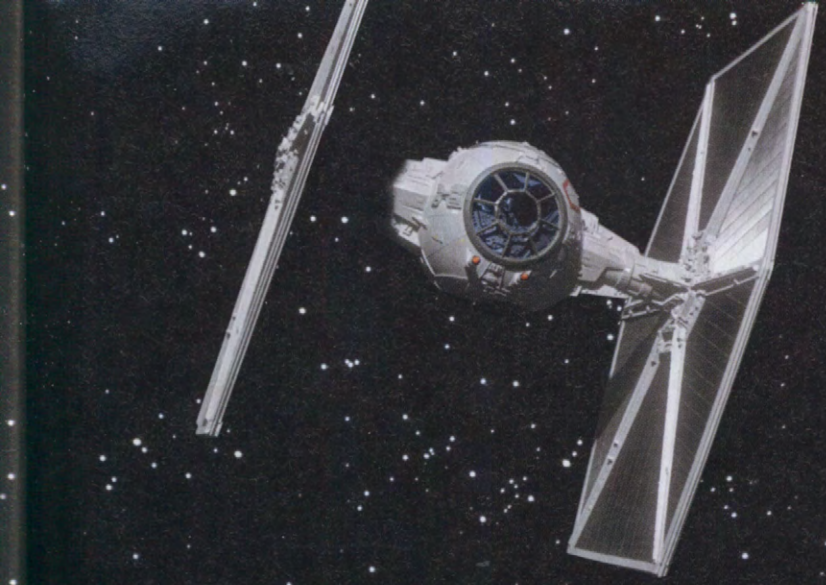
GOODIES WINNER!

From what I have seen the consumer is looking for a champion, someone to turn to for the 'real deal' the 'definitive review', you have the chance to stake a claim as the magazine that does just that. Over the last year you have managed to show your teeth a few times, but you need to get in the habit of showing them more. If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and moves like a duck then it is a good bet it is a duck, even if the game in question was on the front cover. Don't be afraid to vent some spleen, we like to see reviewers with passion.

Paul Barnett

Over the past couple of years we've made a concerted effort to tighten our scoring and reviewing policy. We don't always give 90 per cent scores to cover games (in the past six months only *Commandos 2* has been awarded a Classic and *Emperor: Battle For Dune* (76 per cent) and *Alone In The Dark* (80 per cent) were considerably short of the mark. The fact that these two games come from huge publishers (EA and Infogrames respectively) should be proof we don't feel threatened by big names. All our writers are vastly experienced and say exactly what they think, but that's not to say their opinion is always going to hold with everyone – at the end of the day reviewing has to contain an element of subjectivity. What we try and do is steer you in the direction of the games we think you should buy and tell you why. Hopefully we get it right 90 per cent of the time, in which case we can award ourselves a Classic rating.

We don't always give out high scores for cover games, just when they deserve it .



- Accessible gameplay built upon the familiar RTS engine adapted from Ensemble's popular Age of Empire® series.
- Use the scenario editor to create custom single or multiplayer battlegrounds with virtually any *Star Wars* units and settings.
- Conflicts involve six key civilisations: Galactic Empire, Rebel Alliance, Wookiees, Gungans, Royal Naboo and Trade Federation.
- Execute your campaign over land, sea and air with over 300 different units and structures in single-player campaigns, skirmishes and multiplayer battles.
- Epic real-time strategy set against a backdrop of the entire *Star Wars* saga.

STAR WARS™ GALACTIC BATTLEGROUNDS™

All the dark legions are at his command.
And you control his destiny.

Real-time strategy on a galactic scale.

PC CD ROM

Contenido • Conteúdo
Contenu • Content
ELSPA OK 11+
© ELSPA

LucasArts

© 2001 LucasArts Entertainment Company LLC. © 2001 Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM as indicated. All rights reserved. Used under authorisation. LucasArts and the LucasArts logo are registered trademarks of Lucasfilm Ltd.
Age of Empires is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation.

Forget everything you've seen before...

COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO

Martin Korda **comes out of his cupboard for just about long enough to bring you this World Exclusive preview of the all-new single-player *Counter-Strike* experience**

See the fire sprit
dancing in the flam

Stop burn
or I'll sho

Queues for
Super Slides s
turned na

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Gearbox
PUBLISHER Vivendi
WEBSITE www.gearboxsoftware.com
OUT Q1 2002

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's single-player *Counter-Strike* with bots
- Which means no lag
- No annoying online urchins telling you you're rubbish
- Improved graphics
- You can choose the skill of your opponents
- You can play online with humans and bots
- New mission types, weapons and skins
- Bots that are almost indiscernible from humans

Hands up those of you who remember life before *Counter-Strike*? Anybody? Hmm? Yes you... at the back there? What's that? You're just scratching your armpit are you? Well stop being a filthy animal and pay attention, because I remember that time well. Let me refresh your *Counter-Strike*-addled memories...

You'd leave work before 9.30pm and go to bed before 3am. You'd go home to loved ones or out with friends into social environments. It was a time when holding a spoken conversation wasn't an alien concept, a time when you still remembered what daylight looked like and your appearance didn't resemble that of a corpse, a time when you heard your partner say something other than "You love *Counter-Strike* more than you love me," and "It's either me or the computer." But in time these cries and memories faded into the distance as you donned your can-like headphones in a specially designed shack at the back of your garden, submerging yourself into a new online family of frenzied fraggers, holding typed conversations in a strange new language invented by 12-year-old boys incapable of spelling or saying anything worthwhile other than: "Are there any girls on this server?"

But now a new era is coming. One that will do away with the need for human company, the need for joining with your fellow man to fight for a greater good online. A time when AI will take the place of the human brain and rise up against gaming communities the world over. *Counter-Strike: Condition Zero*, the single-player version of the world's most popular online shooter is coming. And it's going to get you...

They look like human players and play like human players. But they're not.

FORGET EVERYTHING

OK, now forget everything you've heard about this game. Apart from the fact that it's a single-player version of *Counter-Strike* of course, as that bit hasn't changed. Forget everything because *Condition Zero* has changed hands, with Valve now in the background and Gearbox (at the control) having taken over the project, Gearbox has torn up the previous blueprints and started building *CZ* from the ground up. We caught up with Randy Pitchford (Gearbox president and lead designer of *CZ*) to find out how the project is progressing and what we can expect. And after reading what he had to say, we feel pretty confident you'll be as excited as we are.

There have been quite a few companies associated with *Condition Zero*. We've heard you have redesigned it from the ground up. Is this true, and can you enlighten us on the reasons why so many developers have been associated with it?

There's actually only been two phases of *Condition Zero* development – before Gearbox and after Gearbox. Interestingly enough, I had actually begun speaking with Valve about some things that could be done with *Counter-Strike* quite a while ago. Unfortunately our plans didn't allow Gearbox to actually be involved back then. As the popularity of the online version of *Counter-Strike* grew, it became clear it was very important to give fans a single-player experience as well. Initially, another group here in Dallas was enlisted to help develop the game, but things didn't work out for a variety of reasons that aren't worth going into. As luck would have it at that point, Gearbox was finally wrapping up the PS2 version of *Half-Life* and were able to talk with Valve again about doing the *CZ* project. Very quickly, it became clear that the best path for this title to succeed would be for Gearbox and Valve to collaborate, as we have in the past, with primary development being located at our offices in Texas. Gearbox was in a unique position to enlist many of the original *CS* developers to work with our veteran talent to create the new single-player content and game modes. At the same time, we're all working with the CPL to make the new multiplayer features shine.

"Gearbox was in a unique position to enlist many of the original *Counter-Strike* developers"

Are you still going to be using the *Half-Life* engine?

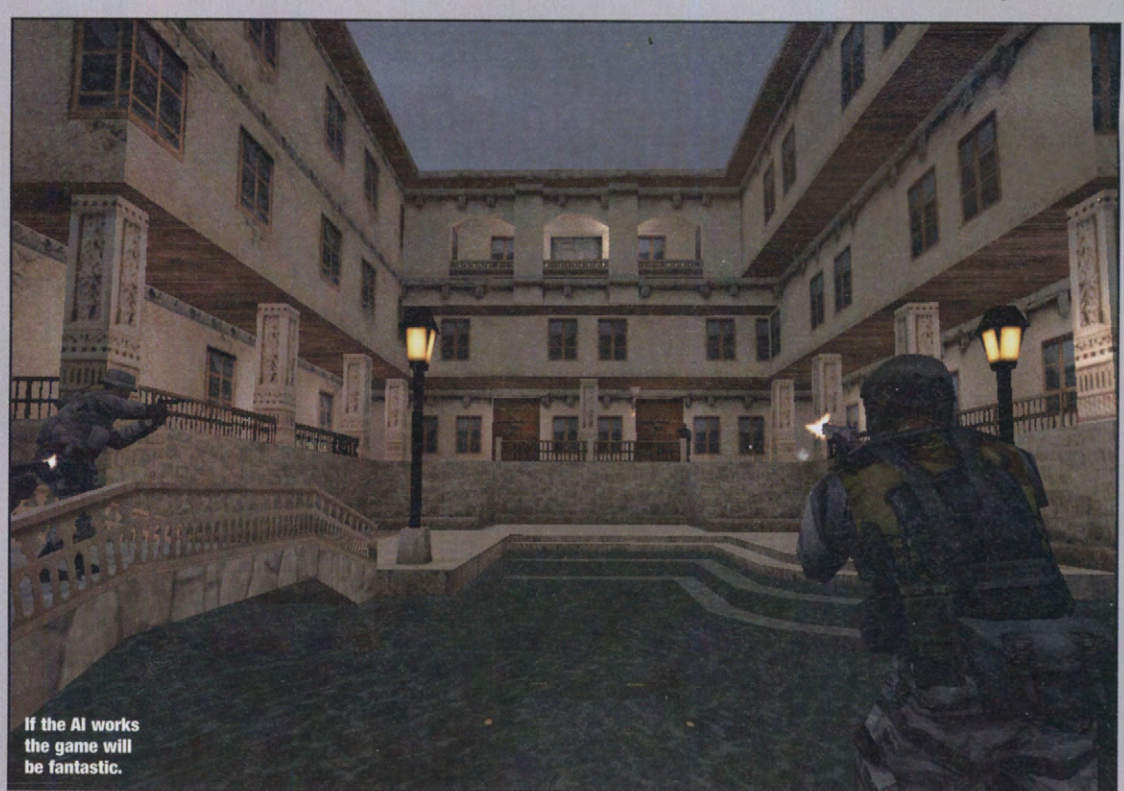
An important goal for *Condition Zero* is for the game to be completely compatible with *Counter-Strike* online. This means we couldn't change engines. What we have been able to do, however, is enhance the engine with a variety of features that very specifically benefit a game like *Condition Zero*. This new technology includes added features to the model-rendering engine including alpha blending, which allows us to add a lot more detail to the environment, added special effects functionality including weather effects and a materials-based feedback system, and a bunch of other cool things that you'll see in the game.

Will the weather effects have any influence over the gameplay?

Other than thick snow reducing visibility, no. However, the weather effects do bring a new sense of believability to the game. There'll be a whole set of scenarios which take place in an Arctic setting, so this will come into play quite a lot.

Are there going to be new and defined character classes?

Character classes aren't defined rigidly, but are more about which people the player recruits, what skills they have and what areas the player wants to improve them in. Some squad recruits


If the AI works the game will be fantastic.

Auditions for *Swan Lake* soon deteriorated into a massacre.

may have some inherent talent as a sniper or runner, but other guys may require lots of training to build up their skills. The more highly skilled recruits will cost more to hire, but will require less investment in training to build up specialised skills. You can train recruits by spending money to improve their skills. Each of the recruits have their own names, personalities and voices.

Will there be any new skins?
Condition Zero adds a new unit type to each team – a Russian Spetznaz on one side and a militia extremist to the other. Also, with all new units, custom uniforms are available for every environment type. When the squad has to go on a mission in snowy conditions, they'll have Arctic gear. In the jungle or in the desert there is appropriate camouflage available.

guys in *Condition Zero*. In the single-player game, the uniforms will be selected automatically based on the environment of the mission selected. In multiplayer, you'll be able to use the variety to make your player model unique and distinguishable from others in the game.

The gameplay in *Counter-Strike* was very different to most FPSs, involving stealth and teamwork. How will the computer AI reflect this?
We've enlisted the help of the author of the POD bot, which is among the best of the AI bots for any FPS game out there. Since he's been involved with

"In blind tests with experienced *CS* players, people were fooled into thinking that the bots in the game were actually human players"

There's also a classic urban uniform that's based on the real-world designs for each unit. Each unit type also offers unique characterisations so that when you add up all of the combinations, there are more than 160 varieties of

Condition Zero, the AI has improved significantly. Now, the bots will be fully integrated into the game and have been adapted for single-player mode as well. In blind tests with experienced *CS* players (including some members of the press), people were fooled into thinking that the bots in the game were actually human players.

Will there be any safeguards to stop people using bots online and pretending it's them playing?
In multiplayer mode, bots are identified on the scoreboard. You won't be able to put your superbot in there, pretend it's human and get it to kill everyone so it looks like you've managed to get a higher score. Server operators will have a lot of control in deciding whether or not they let bots onto their servers. If the server operator doesn't want bots in the game, then they won't ever be able to be added.

What team orders will there be?
The standard radio commands are there and are

understood by the AI. In addition, we plan to give some attention to the radio command system to make it more approachable and probably extend it to offer more appropriate commands for the single-player game (as well as include a few new radio comments that would be useful in multiplayer games but don't currently exist).

Will *CZ* incorporate classic online *Counter-Strike* action? Will you be able to play online with both bots and humans on one team?
Yes. Not only will you be able to add bots to any multiplayer game, you'll be able to play any of the single-player missions co-operatively.

How many players will be able to play on each side, both in the single- and multiplayer games?
Condition Zero supports 32-person multiplayer games. Memory requirements are greater than the minimum specification for large servers, though.

Will the free version of *Counter-Strike* continue to be updated after *Condition Zero* is released?
Yes. In fact, initially there will be a patch that makes *Counter-Strike* totally compatible with *Condition Zero*. Beyond that, there are always improvements to be made and new technology to be added that can improve social aspects and/or foil cheaters.

As a single-player game, how will you implement a coherent sense of continuity, and will there be any consequences from succeeding at a previous mission, but not executing it perfectly?
The single-player game is driven by a narrative that makes the player understand why it's so important to succeed in each mission. Each scenario requires a number of objectives to be completed, nine out of ten of which are new. As objectives are completed, additional funding is earned for the squad that enables the player (as the squad leader) to invest in an improved arsenal, squad training or recruitment of new members. There are some other surprises that money can be spent on as well. Completing all of the objectives of one scenario will yield more funding for the squad, which will give that squad the resources to be better equipped to deal with the next scenario. In some cases, however, it will be necessary to move ahead and acquire things from later missions before the player can go back and complete every objective in an earlier scenario. The single-player game is very well layered and there are tons of incentives to just keep going. I'm very proud of the design for this one as it's clearly the most innovative thing Gearbox has ever done.

Will resources and weapons be transferred from one mission to the next?
Yes.

Will there be any kind of storyline? If so what will it be and how will it be developed eg in-game-cut scenes, FMV etc?
Each mission will have a narrative that includes a sense of place and purpose and a compelling incentive for the player to succeed. Beyond that, we'd like to leave the specifics for fans to discover as they play the game.

How many single-player missions will there be?
Right now we have about 21 scenarios planned, but that number is likely to change before the game is complete. Each scenario has at least ten mission objectives offering more total play-time than all of the scenario there will be key missions such as rescuing hostages and defusing bombs. However, there's also going to be a couple of others too, but we haven't named them yet. We've created a new mode where any member of the team has to get to a specific location and perform an action, like demolish a computer or something. Which means that any member of the team could act as that key player. Another mode is where your team has to escape from somewhere. You start with no weapons, and have to work together as a team to get yourselves out. Whatever happens, there will be at least two completely new game modes, maybe more.

In each scenario there are also a load of other objectives you can go for. You can gain further income by earning certain rewards. For example you could earn a reward for doing nothing but headshots. If you kill every single enemy with a headshot then you get a reward. If all of your team survive, or you're the only person scoring kills, then again, you can get a reward. There'll be other modes of play too. In one of them we'll be putting specific challenges into the objectives for each map. So we can limit the way you can approach a map. So for one map, you may just be allowed to use an MP5. In another map, you may not be able to use guns at all, meaning you have to sneak round using just flash bangs and grenades to complete your objectives. This way we can use the skills that are needed in *Counter-Strike* to challenge players in different ways. Most people just use the same few weapons every time they play. Our goal is to get people to experience the whole game and challenge all of their skills in various ways. You don't have to complete every single objective throughout the game, but if you do you'll earn more money, which will make it easier to complete later missions.

"The single-player game is very well layered and there are tons of incentives to just keep going"

Will there be any other mission goals apart from the classic ones such as hostage rescue and bomb defusal?
Yes. Nine out of ten mission objectives in each scenario are new. In every games we've released thus far added together.

No, you can't have balaclavas.

How does it work with buying equipment when playing in single-player? Do you choose what your bot team-mates buy, or do they get to pick their own equipment at the start of each game?
As squad leader, you can purchase equipment for your team and load them out as you wish depending on

CV

gearbox software

GEARBOX

Gearbox are one of the most respected developers, having produced some of the greatest FPSs in recent gaming history.

1999 *Half-Life Opposing Force*: The first and best add on pack for *Half-Life* which brought in some excellent new enemies and superb new AI.

2000 *Counter-Strike*: The best online shooter got a whole lot better once Gearbox got involved in its development. It's still easily the most popular online shooter around.

2001 *Half Life: Blue Shift*: Slated by everyone for being too short, but it still had plenty to offer for *Half-Life* fans, even if only for a couple of hours.

Look what I've found guys. A box of chocolates.

the mission parameters. Or you can simply select a default load-out and head straight into battle. Once the team is in combat, however, the AI will sometimes make their own decisions about whether or not to pick up an enemy rifle and use that instead of what you've chosen for them.

Can you give us some locations for the new maps?

The missions are varied and extreme. One mission takes place in the locker rooms and concession areas of a soccer stadium in London. Another mission takes place along a massive oil pipeline in the cold Siberian tundra. Yet another scenario takes place in a Middle Eastern city that has been nearly reduced to rubble. One of my favourite missions is an assault on a militia extremist base camp that is assembled from mobile homes – great stuff.

What spec machine will it run comfortably on?

We haven't locked down a target system specification yet, but if you're running *Counter-Strike* well, you'll probably be just fine with *Condition Zero*. We are increasing the polygonal detail of characters by about 75 per cent with the new High Definition models and most of the other content in the game is being improved, so there are some performance considerations there. But, we're also adding level of detail technology to characters to optimise performance with the upgraded content, and we're paying much closer attention to efficient texture usage and brush techniques with level design. So, in some cases *Condition Zero* will actually perform better than *Counter-Strike* as it stands.

When do you think the game will be finished?

Although we haven't yet announced a firm release date, I would expect *Counter-Strike: Condition Zero* to be ready sometime this winter.

So are you excited yet? With a company as proven and reputable as Gearbox at the helm, how can it be anything but mind-blowing? Warn your loved ones now, because come winter they're going to be seeing even less of you than they do already. And rest assured we'll keep you posted about any developments. Just remember where you heard it first.

No vehicles – in Condition Zero you're a foot solider not a tank driver.

GUNNING FOR GLORY

I'm gonna have me some fun... I'm gonna have me some fun...

No FPS is complete without a huge array of exotic weaponry, and they don't get more huge or more exotic than *Condition Zero*'s collection of hardware. Take the standard collection of weapons and equipment in the original *Counter-Strike* and then add about "eight or ten new pieces of equipment, which are mostly new weapons." You can expect all of these to reflect their real-life counterparts because, in the words of Randy, "we live in Texas so we can get our hands on any weapon we want." The Gearbox team has been down to the local gun range, firing weapons, getting the feel for them and recording sound effects. Apparently they soon found out the difference between firing a handgun and a fully automatic weapon, and although they didn't get to fire a LAW rocket they've got loads of video footage and they're sure they've got the effect spot-on. Here are just a few of the new highlights.

LAW rocket
One-shot, portable launch tube for a rocket-propelled grenade. Works like a grenade that travels straight but with a slightly drunk flight path and explodes on impact. Sounds like fun.

Galil
An Israeli assault rifle. The Gearbox team admit to seeing *Way of the Gun* way too many times not to have included this in the game.

FAMAS
This is a French Special Forces weapon. The Gearbox team wanted to give each unit type an appropriate mainstay weapon.

Gas grenade
This grenade lightly obscures vision and causes quite a bit of pain and discomfort to anyone who is caught out not wearing a gas mask.

Molotov cocktail
A glass bottle that features fuel and a burning wick and sets everything in flames when it breaks against the ground – or indeed a person.

A waste of perfectly good beer.

Ballistic Shield
This weapon can be used with a pistol to offer protection against many types of firearms. It will stop most pistols and shotguns outright and will greatly reduce the velocity and destructiveness of most rifles. The shield is extremely useful for squad members in the single-player game or when used by highly organised competitive teams. It also features a very cool plexiglass view port which you can look through when the shield is heldup to protect the head.

The FAMAS is one of several new weapons.

Codename Eagle has landed

BATTLEFIELD 1942

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Digital Illusions CE
PUBLISHER EA
WEBSITE www.dice.se
OUT 2002

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- A full-on 3D warzone with total freedom for the player
- Run, drive, fly, sail. More vehicles than *Operation Flashpoint*
- Sort of like *Counter-Strike* with more features
- Play as British, US, German, Russian or Japanese forces across four locations

Oddly, *Paul Presley* has been covering World War II games for longer than the real thing lasted. This time he marches into Sweden...

It's one o'clock in the morning, I've been in Sweden for all of four hours and I'm sitting in an underground Internet cafe, taking sniper shots at American marketing people from the back of a giant Zeppelin. It's fair to say I've had saner nights. The oddest thing about the whole experience is that the game in which myself, several representatives from Electronic Arts US, and the *Battlefield 1942* development team (along with the company president's brother who owns the café and graciously agreed to let us in after closing time due to my late arrival in the country) are enjoying ourselves with *Codename Eagle*. We gave it 44 per cent when we reviewed it. Other magazines weren't so kind.

There is a legitimate reason behind this odd scenario, though. As Lars Gustavsson, lead designer on *Battlefield 1942*, explains the next morning over a strong coffee. "The original idea for *Codename Eagle* was actually closer to what we're doing now with *Battlefield*, but at the time the publisher of the game was more like a book publisher, and they wanted more of a storyline to it, not just a multiplayer game. Something more like *Half-Life*, an adventure with quests to solve and so on." Hence the game underwent major surgery and the original premise was turned into the lacklustre FPS we saw and ignored. Not that the original dream died, of course. If you delve into the multiplayer side of *Eagle* you get a taste of something greater. Sadly, not enough people did delve into that side of things. "*Codename Eagle* got off on the wrong foot," sighs Gustavsson, "because most of the reviews were solely concentrated on the single-player game, which we admit had good and bad points. If the emphasis had been on the multiplayer game, if people had played it like we did yesterday across the network, you'd have been seeing it in its true environment."

Which is one of immense fun. Understandably, I shuddered at first when they mentioned the plan for that night, but after sitting down with it for a few minutes I found myself engrossed in the sheer mayhem that ensued. The best way to sum it up is basically *Counter-Strike* with vehicles. Two teams, Capture The Flag gameplay and a 1920s setting. You can run around on foot, jump into trucks, jeeps, motorbikes with sidecars, tanks, helicopters, fighter planes, bombers, AA guns, boats and Zeppelins. It's tremendous fun. It's also, basically *Battlefield 1942* (if you add a WWII setting and much better graphics).

"Now you really have to take out that bunker and that machine gun nest to accomplish your mission"

TICKET TOUTS

"The core idea, the kernel of *Eagle* is still in *Battlefield*," reassures Gustavsson, as we tour DICE's new office and see the team at work. While smaller bits and pieces of gameplay have been thought over and redone. It's good to see the

While the war in the Pacific raged on, Tomlinson wondered why his men had been stationed in Portsmouth.

Later that night, Sam and Mike finally expressed their true feelings for one another.

CV

DICE

Previously known as just Digital Illusions, the Swedish coders merged recently with Refraction Games and now go by the moniker Digital Illusions Computer Entertainment (or Digital Illusions Creative Experiences depending on which team member you talk to over the dinner table).

1991 *Pinball Dreams* on the Commodore Amiga sets the world of Tommy impersonators alight.

1994 *Benefactor*, a platform game, is released through Psygnosis. Two other projects, *Hardcore* and *Malfunction*, unfortunately get canned.

1998 *Motorhead* wrongly gives everyone the impression of a heavy-metal themed game. Instead it's a pretty decent racer.

1999 *Codename Eagle*, a "misunderstood" shoot 'em up, sadly fails to make a massive impact. The multiplayer game starts to gain a steady following, though.

2000 DICE buys up Refraction Games and starts to expand into Canada as well as Northern Europe. Meanwhile, *Rally Masters* does the business.

It was only then that Jacob realised the ice cream van music had been a cunning ruse by the Germans.

German or Japanese forces, taking in everything from the storming of Stalingrad to Operation Market Garden to Iwo Jima. "Each map has certain control points," Gustavsson points to a sketch of one such battlefield covered in arrows and notes. "Omaha Beach, for example, has several points, a couple of bunkers, enemy barracks and so on, each of which have to be taken out."

Behind the scenes in each level there is a general 'ticket' system at work. While the Germans control several points, the American side will be losing tickets until they manage to take over certain points. On Omaha Beach, for instance, the tickets would symbolise all the soldiers being shot to bits by the German guns while you storm the beach. "It forces you to push on to each point rather than sitting back and sniping all the time," says Gustavsson. "Now you really have to take out that bunker and that machine gun nest to accomplish your mission." By using this ticket system, DICE can simulate pretty complex scenarios, assigning more units but less advanced hardware to one side, while loading the other with a small but technically superior force.

CONTROLLING CHAOS

If *Codename Eagle* was *Counter-Strike Plus*, sitting down with *Battlefield* puts me more in mind of *Operation Flashpoint*. Although, with less emphasis on a structured squad system. The 'Conquest' missions don't put you in charge of large numbers of units or any of that business. You're one man and can do pretty much what you please. As, of course, are all the AI units on your side. This random factor sounds a little impractical at first, but fortunately Gustavsson insists that basic original idea is still there and is still working." In a nice reversal of fortunes, the emphasis on *Battlefield*'s development this time round is multiplayer, with the single-player campaigns attempting to recreate the feeling of playing online, rather than by adding a hastily thrown together storyline and changing the mission structure.

"The 'Conquest' missions don't put you in charge of large numbers of units or any of that business"

Each of the four campaign theatres – the Pacific, North Africa, East and Western Europe – allow you to recreate key moments from the war, from any side. Play as Brits, US GIs, Russian,

EAGER EAGLES

It's that 'communities' thing again

Even games as seemingly unmemorable as *Codename Eagle* can build a following. There's still a pretty sizeable online fan base out there. They're enthusiastic buggers too. "People playing on the Net try everything, come up with all these ideas that we'd never thought of," says Gustavsson. "They drive armoured cars into the Zeppelins or have motorbike racing competitions around the island or stunt flying contests. We even had one guy on our testing department who started jumping off cliffs with a parachute, just for fun."

There's even an essence of hero worship. "There were a couple of fans in Texas who moved into the same house as each other and started working on their own levels and putting in their own vehicles," he laughs. "When they found out we were working on our own patch they started sending us pizza. They sent us an email asking us what toppings we wanted and got in touch with a pizzeria near where we used to work. Every night, pizza and coke."

In case you're wondering we like Deep Pan Meat Feasts here at *ZONE*. Show us how much you love us. Especially when we're on deadline.

Codename Eagle has built up a sizeable online community.

Could this be the next *Counter-Strike*?

Aerial fire delivery was a fast-growing business, and Donaldson wasn't slow to catch on.

while the impression of unpredictability is there on the surface, there are a lot of controls going on in the background.

"You have a multi-layered AI at work," he clarifies. "There are the small individual bot AIs and also the overall General AI directing you and giving orders. You get your mission briefing at the start of each level and can choose to stick with the AI soldiers, heading for the same control points as they do. These will always be interesting areas that have to be taken out. Or you can choose to go your own way, even though you don't know what you'll stumble upon. It could be a minefield or another machine gun in the bushes."

STICK TOGETHER

While the game structure seems to encourage lone wolf behaviour, the combination of the ticket system and the adaptive AI means that strength in numbers is often the best bet.

"Sticking with the other soldiers may still be dangerous but it's usually the best way of succeeding," smiles Gustavsson. It also means that no two games are likely to ever be the same. "There are very few scripted moments in the game," says Gustavsson with a small hint of pride. "If you see a burning plane fly over your head or a dogfight up in the clouds, it's not scripted. It's just pure luck that in that particular game it happened and you got a dramatic view of it."

While playing *Battlefield*, it rapidly becomes obvious that this is primarily being designed as a multiplayer title (it isn't long after being given the controls that an eight-player network game suddenly springs to life and I'm confronted by human AI for the rest of the afternoon), and we'll delve more deeply into that side of things in a month or two in Online *ZONE*. That said, there should still be plenty of life in the single-player game, especially since DICE no longer has to deal with a publisher that insists on trivial things like storylines. Hopefully the freeform nature of *Battlefield 1942* will set it apart from the ranks of other WWII titles heading our way in the coming months. PCZ

Get your pointy hats on it's...

POOL OF RADIANCE: RUINS OF MYTH DRANNOR

We have goblins, we have playable code, we have *Chris Anderson*. It's game on

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Ubi Soft
PUBLISHER Stormfront Studios
WEBSITE www.poolofradiance.com
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: November 2001

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

- A complex, traditional role-playing game with a myriad of stats
- A convincing behind-the-scenes Dungeon Master
- Massive dungeons
- Looks better than the one they did in 1988, which is nice

CV

STORMFRONT STUDIOS

Unusally for the creators of a hardcore RPG, Stormfront Studios is best known for its many versions of the driving sim Nascar, which appeared across various formats. This is its first serious foray into the RPG genre, and on the evidence we've seen, Stormfront clearly knows what it's doing.

1998 Starfire Soccer Challenge. One of the PC's more forgettable soccer games.

1999 Nascar Revolution. A competent if unspectacular racing game.

Welcome to the *Pool Of Radiance II* playtest. You will find herein a fairly detailed analysis of the early part of the game, along with an honest opinion on which direction the game is heading, and whether or not it's heading somewhere you are likely to want to follow it when it's released in a couple of months.

First off, forget the original *Pool Of Radiance*. Aside from the heavy use of detailed AD&D stats, rules and numbers, this game bears little or no resemblance to its accomplished but antiquated predecessor, which captured the imagination of goblin-bashers around the world all those years ago. Visually, of course, it's an entirely new ball game. The graphics won't stun you, they won't bowl you over, you won't be writing letters to your friends to tell them about the best-looking RPG you've ever seen. However, while the graphics are reasonably impressive (particularly for spell effects), it is my belief that the kind of people who will want to play this game won't care one bit what it looks like. This an old-skool RPG in every sense of the word. You can play it as though you care not one toss for all the number-crunching and rules in effect behind the action, but if you do so you will surely die, and often. Yes, this is a hardcore goblin affair: casual gamers need not apply.

"The kind of people who will want to play this game won't care one bit what it looks like"

How do they carry all this stuff?

Now that's just ridiculous.

This is a dungeon. You'll be seeing a lot of these.

Some of the spell effects are quite impressive.

The shop has nothing much of interest to start with, but you can dump everything you get here for money.

Still turn-based after all these years.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE

Details of the main man...

A computer-controlled Dungeon Master informs you of key events as you traverse the dungeon. He fills you in on NPCs you meet, explains the meaning of puzzles, and sets the scene when you enter new areas by telling you what you can expect when you move on. The voice-over for this character is unusually professional, and this is one of the game's features that truly sets it apart from its rivals in the genre.

BRING IT ON

Character creation. This is the point where you can either grab a couple of ready-made characters and head straight into the action, or do the sensible thing and make a few of your own that will actually come in useful. You can have four characters in total. For the purposes of this playtest I created a cleric (for healing and turning undead), a rogue (for opening locked doors and chests), a fighter (for upfront melees), and a sorcerer (for inflicting heavy damage). At the beginning of the game there are a few minor skirmishes but nothing major – it's only when you get to the first dungeon that the game starts proper. There's a shopkeeper in the first area before the dungeon, but he sells nothing you want except things you can't afford so let's ignore him for now.

The first dungeon is huge. I spent a long time in it and barely uncovered half of it. All the usual RPG fare can be found here: locked doors that require specific keys, NPCs that give you quests, hidden doors and traps, and of course, monsters, everywhere you turn. Come close to any monster in the dungeon and combat is automatically initiated. Each of your characters gets a 'turn' to perform an action or attack a monster, and the monsters do exactly the same thing on their turn. One thing that struck me as odd straight away was the amount of times my characters missed the enemy. I'm not joking, my fighter went through three long battles without hitting a single thing. This particular point will determine whether love or hate *Pool Of Radiance*.

If you're the kind of person who gets frustrated when your characters keep 'missing' the enemy that's standing beside them (successful attacks are determined by hidden dice rolls), then stay as far away from this game as you can. You will miss more times than you hit. The advantage here is most of the monsters miss just as often, and you can find items in the dungeons that increase your chance of successful hits (once my fighter eventually found an axe he could actually hit something with, it was cause for great celebration). Be warned, though, it's no standard real-time RPG. If you want constant action it's unlikely to be the game for you.

TEST RESULTS

It's probably only serious AD&D fans that will love this. I say probably because while they will drool over all the hidden stats and dice-rolling nonsense going on in the background, it remains to be seen whether the game will open up, or whether it will prove to be just another long dungeon crawl with nothing to break the monotony. Will there be outdoor areas? Will you meet interesting NPCs? Will the storyline keep you engrossed? These are all questions I can't answer here, but I will answer them in next issue's detailed review. I bet you can't wait. PCZ

They thought it was all over, it clearly isn't.

Better than *Archimedean Dynasty*? We don't know yet, obviously.

You have to admit, it looks stunning.

A compelling storyline will complement the arcade action, allegedly.

AQUANOX

It's the sequel to *Archimedean Dynasty*, so it's bound to be alright, claims *Chris Anderson*

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Fishtank
PUBLISHER Massive Development
WEBSITE www.aquanox.de
OUT Q3 2001

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- One of the most graphically stunning titles currently in development
- The sequel to the bestseller *Archimedean Dynasty*
- There aren't many underwater shoot 'em ups, thankfully this one is looking good
- Hugely atmospheric both graphically and in terms of gameplay

Archimedean Dynasty achieved a reasonable amount of critical acclaim on its release, and having sold 150,000 copies, it would appear PC gamers took it to their hearts. So it shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone that a sequel is in the works, except Blue Byte is no longer at the helm. Instead, Massive Development has taken up the reigns and is currently working round the clock to improve on the original in every possible way.

The sequel takes place in the year 2666, five years after the end of the original game. Sure enough, a new force has emerged to threaten the safety of Neopolis, the scene for the underwater battle between good and evil. A mysterious pirate gang called the Crawlers are up to no good and have joined forces with rebels in a civil war that has shaken the world of Neopolis. Just when you thought things couldn't possibly get worse, a scientific experiment goes horribly wrong unleashing hordes of godlike creatures into the world, which may sound horribly clichéd but let's face it, they have to give you something to shoot at or the game would be no fun at all.

"There are more than 30 single-player missions, nine different player ships and 40 different enemies"

In its simplest form, *AquaNox* is an arcade underwater shoot 'em up with dazzling graphics and more than its fair share of spectacular gratuitous explosions. Beyond that, you can expect to encounter mercenaries, pirates, squid and all manner of underwater wildlife intent on your destruction. There are more than 70 NPCs in the game, many of whom will have key parts in the storyline, so we assume there will be a lot more to this title than simply blowing things up. There are more than 30 single-player missions, nine different player ships and 40 different enemies, including some terrifyingly large creatures.

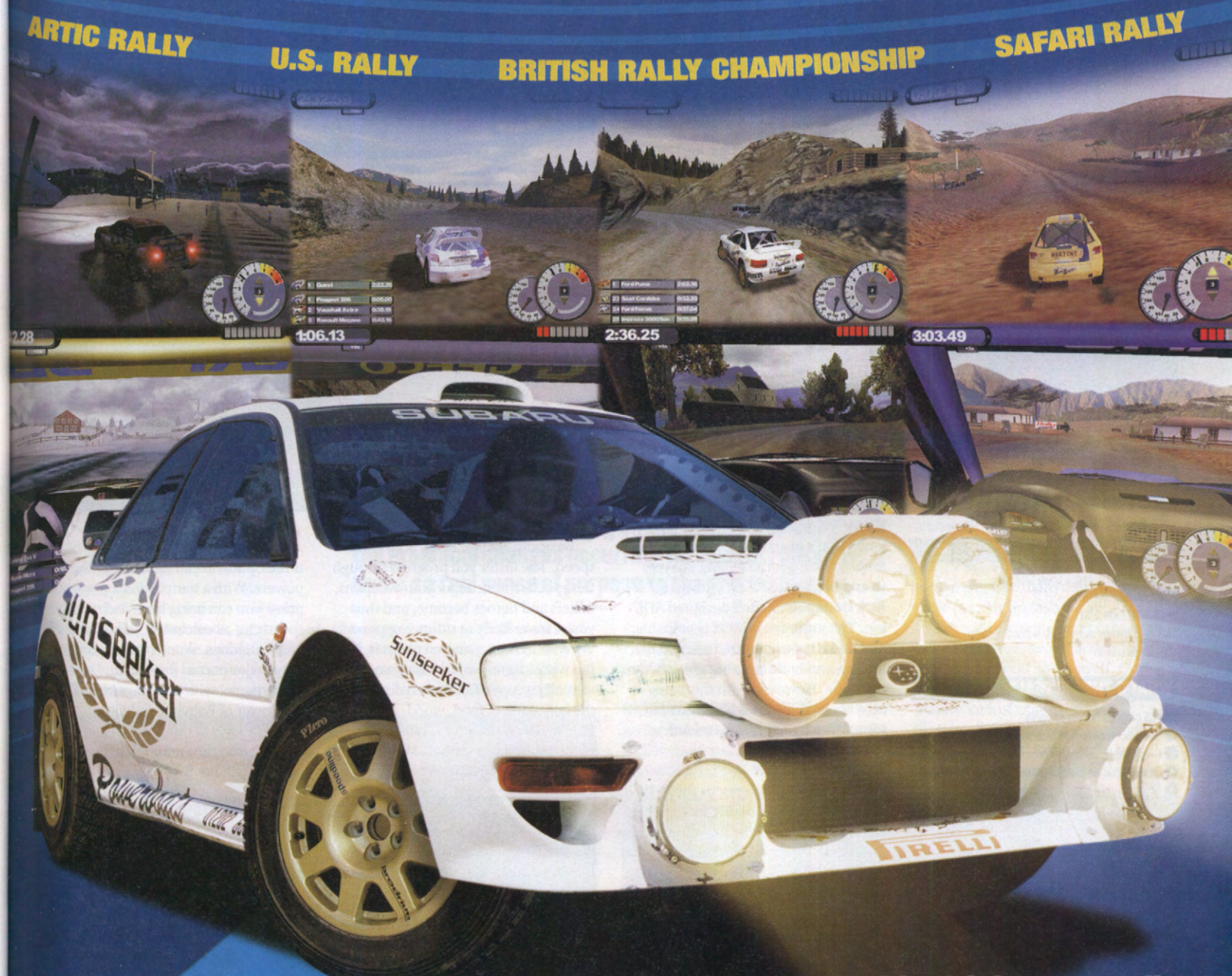
YOU WILL BE SCARED

While *AquaNox* is not expected to break new ground in gameplay terms, our hopes are that the atmosphere and storytelling that made the first game so good are still intact. We've been playing the Beta code for a couple of weeks, and the action is incredibly fast paced, and is probably best described as a cross between *Quake III* and *Starlancer*, only underwater... obviously.

Archimedean Dynasty went a long way to giving players a reason for relentlessly pursuing enemies and blowing them up, we hope this is still the case with the sequel. Massive Development has dropped the simulation elements which they say weren't useful in the first game, and added easier navigation and a greater selection of tactical options, which will hopefully add more depth to the combat side of the game. While we will obviously reserve our opinion until we get our hands on the review code, we can say *AquaNox* is looking very good indeed at this point. In Massive Development's own words: "We promise: you *will* be scared stiff". I don't know about you, but I'm shaking already. PZ

ACTUALIZE

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP XTREME



"Rally Championship Xtreme - setting the new standard in driving games"
- 3D Files

"The best looking rally game on the PC yet"
- PC Format

Marcus Dodd - British National Champion

www.rallychampionshipxtreme.com

Endorsed by Sunseeker

POWERED BY: gamespy

PC CD ROM

Distributed by ELECTRONIC ARTS

WARTHOG

Rally Championship Xtreme - Copyright © 2001 Actualize Ltd.

Rocking our world...

EMPIRE EARTH

***Keith Pullin* plays the Earth at its own game**

Just one parking space left.

View the action from just about any angle.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Stainless Steel Studios
PUBLISHER Sierra
WEBSITE Late 2001
OUT http://www.sierrastudios.com/games/empireearth

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Full glorious history of earth
- Good 3D engine with nice zoom feature
- Designed by same guy who did *Age Of Empires*
- Stupendous amount of ground, sea and air units
- Great sound effects, music and general atmosphere

Empire Earth is without doubt one of the most stunning feats of endeavour since Hannibal squeezed his elephants over the Alps. Covering more than 500,000 years of inglorious war spanning 14 epochs, this is the kind of game you can take to school, play during history and get away with it on educational grounds.

But let's not get carried away. Sure, the researchers for *EE* must have exhausted the world's supply of Prozac months ago, but the fact remains it's just a damn game. What's more, it's a game that's so similar to *Age Of Empires*, you get the feeling lawyers would be involved if *EE*'s designer, Rick Goodman, hadn't designed *AOE* too. The influence of *AOE* is palpable, and there are even sound effects (like mining and building) that are exactly the same. However, with this being a beta version, it's likely that the final sound files have yet to be added.

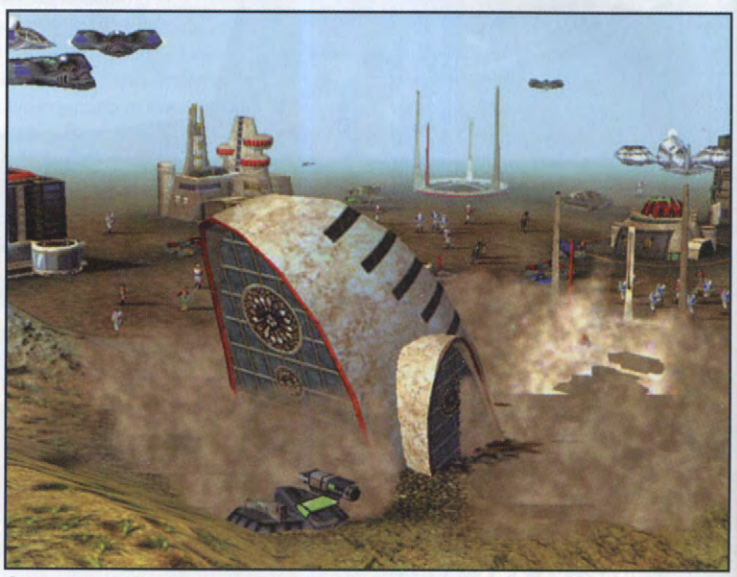
MOVE ALONG NOW

What of the famous epochs then? Well, some of the more notable moments in history include Prehistoric, Stoneage, Industrial, WWI, WWII and the futuristic Nano Age. The epoch system itself actually works in the same way as technology progressed in *AOE*. In other words, once you've gathered enough resources and established certain key structures such as barracks and stables, you move onwards to new technology and a truly awesome amount of upgrades. For example, once you reach into the Atomic Age, towers become 88mm AA guns and docks become naval shipyards. Likewise, special 'hero' units like Napoleon make way for the likes of Baron Richthofen.

"Once you reach Atomic Age, towers become 88mm AA guns and docks become naval shipyards"

Basically, *Empire Earth* is all about speed. The faster you progress through the epochs the stronger your weapons, beliefs and heroes become, and thus you're more likely to trounce opponents. We hate to keep going on about it, but the whole framework of the game is virtually a copy of *AOE* even down to the collection of food, wood, stone, gold and iron resources. When it comes to the multiplayer game... Well, you'll hardly notice the difference.

One notable difference though, is the option to call upon metaphysical powers. With a temple and a powerful priest you can bring forth such spectacles as volcanoes, earthquakes and tornadoes. Wonders also play a very major part in the spiritual side of the game, with buildings such as the Tower of Babylon and Library of Alexandria helping to reveal the enemy strongholds and to convert enemy civilians.



Play through the epochs, from the past, the present and the future.

An in-depth tutorial will teach you all the subtleties of being a great commando.

Ben who?

CV STAINLESS STEEL STUDIOS

Started up by Rick 'Age Of Empires' Goodman, *Empire Earth* is Stainless Steel Studios' first title.

1995 *Age Of Empires* designer Rick Goodman and his brother start up Ensemble Studios and produce this classic strategy game. A title that inspired countless spin offs, including this one.

1998 *Empire Earth* Leaving Ensemble Studios, Rick Goodman starts up Stainless Steel Studios in Cambridge Massachusetts. He begins work on *Empire Earth*, starting with a new engine and building the game from the ground up.

WHO SAYS HUMANS ARE STUPID?

Although we've been informed that the AI has yet to be finalised it's nice to see most of the units have a brain. Unit path-finding is good, and military types appear to know their stuff when it comes to battle positions – they even have the good sense to retreat when being pasted. There are also four different behaviour patterns to choose from including guard mode, patrol mode, aggressive mode and defensive mode. Our personal favourite is the 'explore' icon that unsurprisingly sets your selected unit wandering off into the wilderness. So, if you've had enough of manually exploring fog-of-war, you can understand what a stroke of pure genius this particular option is.

Even panicky farmers seem to have lost their usual simple view of life by adopting a brave 'never say die' attitude that keeps them glued to fields in all but the most violent attack. We only have one problem with the units at this stage of development and that's the way they keep getting lost behind buildings. But, it's a simple problem and should be easy enough to fix.

"The music varies depending on the epoch, and along with the graphical changes occurring throughout the game there's a real sense of purpose to the proceedings"

GETTING DOWN AND DIRTY

By far the most striking thing about *EE* is the whole atmosphere. The music varies depending on the epoch, and along with the graphical changes occurring throughout the game there's a real sense of purpose to the proceedings. *EE* also hints at a unique rawness that *AOE* never managed. The liberal use of blood and the ability to zoom right into the action helps of course, but there's something else there that we can't quite put our finger on... Yet.

So, with a couple of months to go before release *Empire Earth* is looking and feeling good about itself. Our only major criticism at this point is the blatant lack of originality, but if Stainless Steel Studios is sacrificing that for good old fashioned playability, who are we to complain? PCZ

A VIEW TO A KILL

Zooooooooom, zooooooooom, zoooom

Although *Empire Earth* bares many similarities to *Age Of Empires*, its one defining difference is that you can zoom right into the thick of the action. But can you really play from this view, or is it just a flashy feature that will look great but be useless in terms of gameplay? Having spent the best part of a week playing the Beta, I have to admit it's nearly impossible to play from this view. However, it's pretty quick and easy to zoom in and out, so the best thing to do is issue your orders from the standard overhead view and then zoom in to take a quick look at the carnage, which you have to admit, looks pretty spectacular up close.

Issue your orders from here.

Watch them being implemeted from here.

Empire Earth covers both World Wars.

It's nearly finished, we've played it...

CIVILIZATION III

Martin Korda **lacks civility, culture and diplomacy, but he was free at the time, so we got him to playtest the latest build of Sid Meier's latest epic**

CV

FIRAXIS

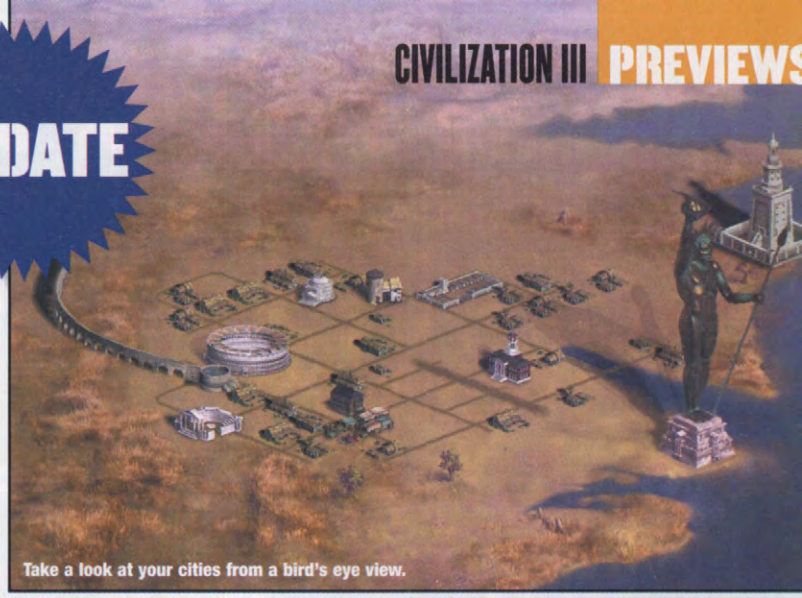
FIRAXIS GAMES

After a long and distinguished career at Microprose during which time he masterminded timeless classics such as *Civilization* and *Railroad Tycoon*, the legendary Sid Meier set up Firaxis Games in 1996. After five years of success, Firaxis is about to release its most anticipated game to date, *Civilization III*, which should propel the company to ever greater heights.

1997 *Sid Meier's Gettysburg*. This was the company's first release. Meier's name alone could have sold this civil war strategy game had it been a stinker. Fortunately,it wasn't and it sold well.

1999 *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri*. Dubbed by most as *Civilization* in space, for the most part it was just that, but more complex. And it looked ugly. Otherwise it was excellent. In the same year, *Antietam* – the follow-up to *Gettysburg* – was released. It was much the same as its predecessor, but it had an even more stupid name.

UPDATE


Take a look at your cities from a bird's eye view.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Firaxis Games
PUBLISHER Infogrames
WEBSITE www.firaxis.com
OUT November/December

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's *Civilization*
- It's by Sid Meier
- New cultural elements to enhance your civilization's influence
- Hugely simplified interface
- Improved diplomacy and trade options

It's a somewhat overlooked fact, but while we've all been busy crowbarring our eyes back into our sockets after marvelling at the next generation of FPSs, two behemoth strategy games have been heading for a confrontation of truly epic proportions over the next couple of months. If you haven't guessed yet, I'm talking about *Empire Earth* and *Civilization III*. Both span thousands of years of human history and centre around building a powerful and prosperous nation. Needless to say then, that when they finally do face off against each other over the next couple of months, it won't be your average girlie hair-pulling, knuckle-biting and open-handed slapping contest, but an all-out brawl involving pickaxes through craniums.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Of course there are plenty of differences between these two god/strategy games as well, the most notable of which is that *Civ III* is sticking to its turn-based roots and thought-provoking gameplay while *Empire Earth* is an RTS, with specific focus on combat.

From the brief time I had with the *Civ III* beta code, it was more than obvious that Firaxis has taken on board criticisms from *Civ II* and implemented them to create a truly sublime and totally immersive gaming experience.

SO WHAT'S NEW?

For starters, you'll be pleased to know that the copious and annoying pull-down menus which blighted *Civ II* and made it about as visually appealing as a run-over head, have been replaced by intuitive icons dotted helpfully around the screen, which will make the series much more accessible to newcomers previously scared off by the game's daunting complexity.

And that's just for starters. Even the first few menu screens have been carefully restructured and improved, so you can have greater control over the size, geography and topography of your gaming world. If you're new to the series, then an in-depth tutorial can help you become accustomed, as you're shepherded carefully through every aspect of building up your own civilization. The graphics have also been spruced up and an excellent and superbly generic musical score helps build atmosphere to the slow and deliberate gameplay.

"An excellent musical score helps build atmosphere to the slow and deliberate gameplay"

BARBARIC CULTURE

One of the most annoying aspects of previous *Civ* games was the randomness of barbarians, who would spring up from nowhere, catch you unaware and ransack your cities, steal all your gold and massacre your population. Barbarians now originate from encampments, where they store any stolen gold. So if you are unlucky enough to succumb to their attacks, all you have to do is find their encampment, march over there with a colossal army and give them a good old-fashioned drubbing. Simple as that.

Of course, you can't just rely on a large army if you want to build a prosperous culture, and *Civ III* comes with a whole host of new avenues for you to explore during your nation's centuries-long journey to greatness. Trade, diplomacy and most of all culture, (see the Getting Some Culture panel) have all been hugely revamped and to a great extent, simplified. For example, I found that caravans and freights are no longer movable units. Instead, I just built trading routes between my cities and with a few extra commands, the rest pretty much took care of itself. And diplomacy and espionage have also done away with movable units that are time-consuming and hard to track, as you can now simply build an embassy in an opposition territory and run your covert operations from there instead.

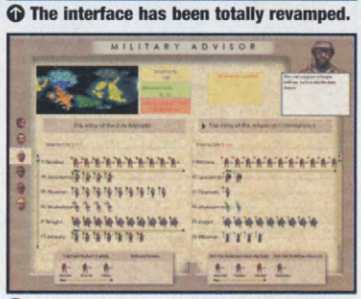
SECONDS OUT...

By the time I'd built up a sizeable and powerful nation, which was economically prosperous, culturally advanced and a major military force, I'd come to the conclusion that *Civ III* had evolved somewhat. In many respects it's still the same game as it's still complex and challenging, but it's managed to lose some of its anally retentive qualities, while retaining all of its charm and addictiveness. My nation loved me, I was a hero in their eyes, they'd built me a new castle and everyone respected my opinion (there's a first time for everything). As I gazed down on my gargantuan capital city from the superb new bird's-eye view, I couldn't help but feel that *Civ III* will be a huge hit. But then again so will *Empire Earth*. We'll let you know who wins this titanic ruck next month when we'll (hopefully) get our hands on the review code for both. Until then, here are some pretty pictures to help you pass the time... PCZ

Your cultural prowess helps define your nations boarders.

Quite a nice little pad really.

The interface has been totally revamped.



I reckon we can win this one.

GETTING SOME CULTURE

Do you want to join my culture club?

Possibly the largest overhaul from *Civ II* are the cultural elements. No longer will this be confined to the amount of clueless businessmen who visit your art gallery and make pretentious comments. Instead, your nation's cultural influence will be something that can be used as a strategic weapon against rival countries, although unfortunately, this won't include the option of sticking ballet dancers and violinists into cannons and firing them at your enemies.

Every city now earns you a certain amount of culture points depending on how many Wonders and cultural buildings (such as libraries and temples) each one has. Each city will then exude a sphere of influence, which will help determine your nation's borders. If these overlap a rival nation's city, they then become influenced by your culture, and if they're impressed enough, will abandon their current nation and join yours. Which of course will prove incredibly handy to you if your army consists of little more than a group of fishermen armed with rakes, as it takes away the emphasis on violence and allows you to play the whole game in an entirely different way.

Wonders mean culture.

COMANCHE 4

***Paul Presley* gets his rotor blades in a twist**

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER NovaLogic
PUBLISHER NovaLogic
WEBSITE www.novalogic.co.uk
OUT November 2001

BIG DEAL

- Arcade-style autogyro action
- Story-based mission structure
- Advanced graphical effects
- No more voxels

I told you so. You sneered and you scoffed and you sniggered when I told you that the future of flight sims was going to lie in the casual gaming sector. But I have held fast to my beliefs and can now chortle with a thin layer of smug self-satisfaction as my prophecies are borne out. Call me the Nostradamus of the gaming world if you will.

What am I prattling on about? NovaLogic has eschewed traditional hardcore simulation controls in the fourth of the *Comanche* series and has substituted what are essentially *Quake* controls instead. The more familiar mouse and ASWD keys (pronounced "Aswad" in honour of the seminal '80s dub-Reggae musicians whom, I'm led to believe, were the first people ever to shoot someone in the face with a railgun) are used to fly from one waypoint to the next. Less simulation, more stimulation as someone with a college degree in Annoying Ad Blurb Speak might say before being stabbed in the shin for being a git.

BOOM BOOM CARNIVAL

You know what to expect really from the *Comanche* series. Action-orientated helicopter high jinks with a bizarre dependence on a graphical technology that was all well and good seven years ago but has since been superseded by advances in 3D accelerator cards. And that's pretty much the deal here with *Comanche 4*, except without the voxels. NovaLogic has finally given in and gotten with the program. It's 3D TnL D3D AGP T&A, er, TTFN all the way. Or, for anyone that speaks English, it sure looks pretty.

The move away from voxels means that all sorts of graphical effects can be employed. The cream of the bees bollocks is some very realistic-looking rotor wash – dust and debris getting kicked up as you approach the ground, trees and grass blowing about as you hover above them and water spraying all over as you fly low over the waves.

"The cream of the bees bollocks is some very realistic-looking rotor wash as you approach the ground"

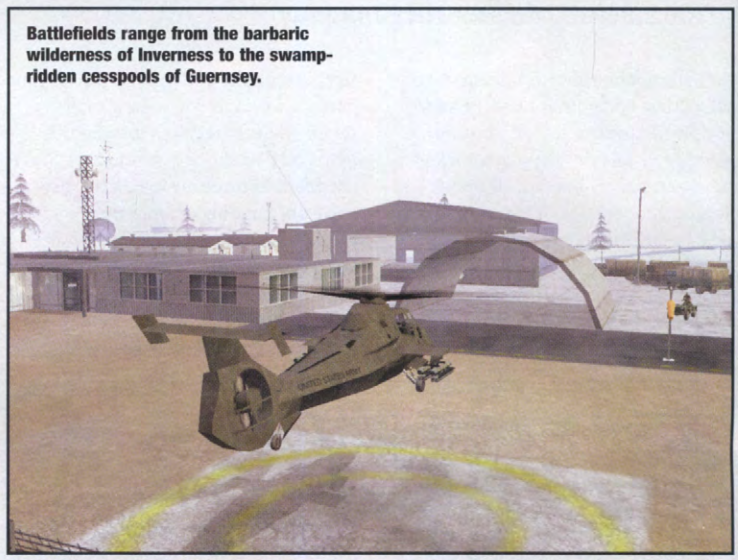
The multiplayer game will feature online tournaments via NovaWorld.

So, with the simplified FPS-style controls and better-looking graphics, *Comanche 4* is trying to lift the series from the awkward middle ground it's always found itself in (and been hindered by), and is saying: "Look, we're an arcade game. Plain and simple. You want simulation – you can piss off."

WARRIOR CHARGE

This is further evidenced by the mission structure. No dynamic campaigns or any of that nonsense. What you get here is Hollywood-style action. Hell, NovaLogic might as well have signed the *Airwolf* licence and let us live out all our Jan-Michael Vincent/Ernest Borgnine fantasies for a change (bar the one involving a baby oil delivery mission to Nude Island). So far it's looking great, and we'll let you know exactly what we think of it next month, when we'll get our hands on the review code. PCZ

No more voxels.

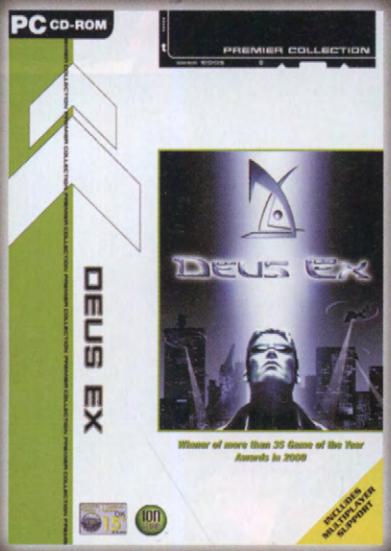


Battlefields range from the barbaric wilderness of Inverness to the swamp-ridden cesspools of Guernsey.

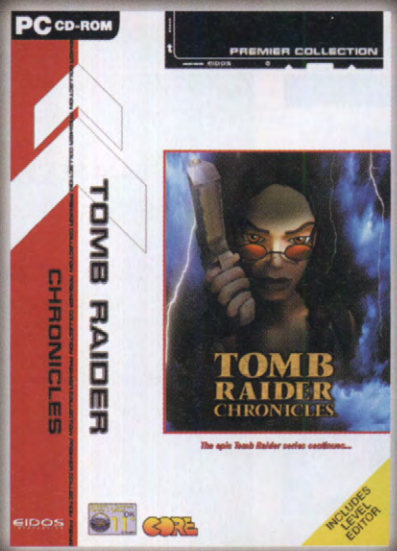
Arcade-style action takes precedence over authentic military procedures.

Missions generally involve large things exploding.

CHALLENGE YOUR MIND NOT YOUR POCKET

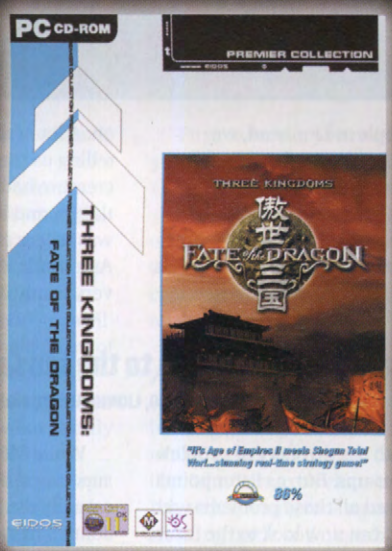


Game of the year -- BAFTA



"A thoroughly enjoyable romp."

PCZONE



"It's Age of Empires II meets Shogun Total Wars!... stunning realtime strategy game!"

"If you loved the movie then you'll find it hard not to be won over by the game."

PC gameplay

JUST £12.99

EIDOS BRINGS YOU THE NEWEST ADDITIONS TO OUR PREMIER COLLECTION - QUALITY GAMES AT A GREAT PRICE!

WWW.EIDOS.COM

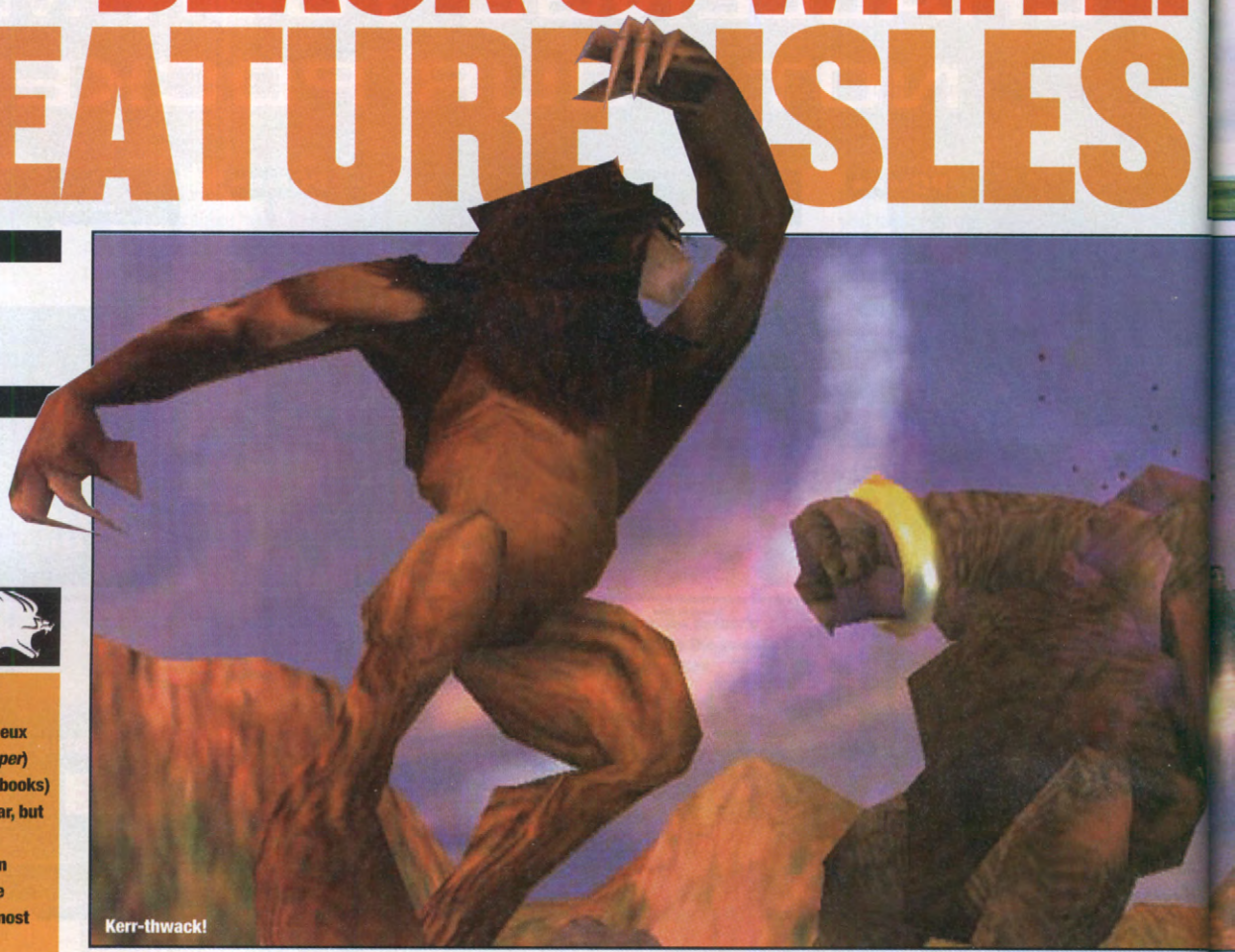
PC CD-ROM

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

All copyrights are recognised. All trademarks are the properties of their respective owners. © and Published by Eidos Interactive Limited. 2001.

UPDATE

Move over Erotica Island, it's BLACK & WHITE: CREATURE ISLES


Kerr-thwack!

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Lionhead Studios
PUBLISHER EA
WEBSITE www.bwgame.com
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- More than 20 hours of gameplay
- Creature sex
- Improved AI
- Loads of original subgames

CV

LIONHEAD

The company founded by Peter Molyneux (*Populous*, *Theme Park*, *Dungeon Keeper*) and Steve Jackson (*Fighting Fantasy* books) has only produced *Black & White* so far, but they have a couple of Xbox projects underway. Peter himself is working on a completely new project going by the working title of Dimitri, which will almost certainly come out on PC.

2001 *Black & White*. The game that needs no introduction. Quite simply one of the best games ever made

There's no question about it, *Black & White* is a game that has provoked enormous passions among gamers the world over, some of whom are totally in love with the concept and spend every waking moment nurturing their creatures, some of whom are still furious at the number of bugs the game shipped with. "The bugs were totally unforgivable," says Peter Molyneux, clearly upset that his grand vision was blurred for some people by technical problems. "I take the issue really, really seriously and it did colour a lot of people's judgment of the game." We know what he means. Like the people at Lionhead, we experienced no bugs whatsoever when we reviewed the game and subsequently received a backlash of criticism from some of you for failing to mention the problems. It really was a case of the complexity of the game clashing with the diversity of people's computer set-ups. But, as Peter points out, they fixed all those problems with patches and can now look to the future of *Black & White*.

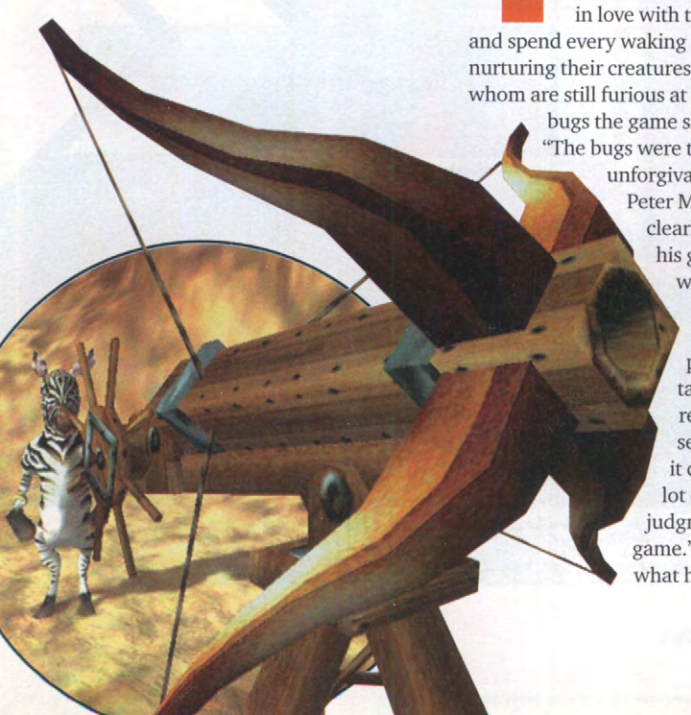
> **"We really paid attention to the fans of *Black & White*"**
> **PETER MOLYNEUX, CEO, LIONHEAD STUDIOS (CREATOR OF *BLACK & WHITE*)**

X-RATED

The immediate future is the add-on *Creature Isles*, a pseudo-sequel that improves on many areas of the original while concentrating on one specific thing: the creatures. "We really paid attention to the fans of *Black & White*," says Peter, "and what the clan sites really wanted were either more RTS elements or more creature stuff going on. A lot of the feedback was people telling us they had hoped their creature had been able to do more things, and it soon became clear that was where most of the interest was. As a result, *Creature Isles* focuses very firmly on the creatures."

While Molyneux has closely supervised the project, the add-on is actually the brainchild of Lionhead's Jonty Barnes, who explains that the ultimate goal of the game is to "have a shag." Let me elaborate.

Remember those missionaries who wanted to sailed to distant lands in *Black & White*, the ones with the incredibly annoying song, with their notion about the ocean and so on? Well, they've stumbled on to a new island populated by a brotherhood of godless creatures. These creatures will allow you to join their brotherhood and, most importantly, mate with Eve,



the only female creature on the island, if you complete a set of trials.

"The main creature you have to convince," says Jonty "is Mercutio the crocodile, the guardian of Eve. We haven't compromised the *Black & White* game design at all, so you can still achieve this by both good and evil means." Once you've convinced him of your worthiness you can witness the "shagging" taking place, although Peter is a bit sketchy as to what exactly will occur on screen. "You'll have to play the game to find out how explicit the mating is," he says. "But these are animals, so we could do a Richard Attenborough close-up. I'm not saying we will do that, but it's a possibility."

MARRIED WITH CHILDREN

The result of this happy union is a creature sprog, who will then learn from your creature, increase your own powers and give you a lot more spells. This will have immense repercussions in online games, since anyone playing with two creatures will have a definite advantage.

First, however, you need to guide your creature through a series of tests. Obviously, you can import the creature you have built up over months in the original game, but if you haven't got one or it isn't advanced enough you can start with one that already has all the basic training.

Jonty showed us some of the trials you'll be facing, essentially loads of fun subgames. There's a fully-working bowling game you have to play against a highly competitive cow (who's a bit like John Turturro's character in *The Big Lebowski*), a long race against a cheating turtle and a combat arena where you must defeat a Jedi-like creature, to name just a few.

There is also a running test in the shape of a small chicken you have to look after, to prove you are good enough to be a father to Eve's offspring. He's not just a burden, though, he'll get involved in the tests and help you out.

Although the gameplay is firmly based around the creatures and the trials you have to complete, you can still get villages to join you, and you can get them to help you with those trials. The mission-based structure doesn't get in the way of total freedom, as you can approach problems from all sorts of angles and create your own strategies.

When you do finally manage to get a fruit from your loins, the game is not necessarily over. The trials remain open and you can improve your offspring by participating in them, there's also a few hidden ones that'll only be available at a later stage of the game. With more than 20 hours of gameplay promised, new tweaks and improved AI, *Creature Isles* should satisfy the most ardent *B&W* fans, and maybe a few zoophiles too. PCZ

BLACK & WHITE 2

This is just the beginning

***Creature Isles* is just the first step in Lionhead's expansion of *Black & White*, and the company has plans for the future of the series in the shape of sequels and perhaps further add-ons. While it's true Peter Molyneux is already working on his new project, 'Dimitri', he is still involved in the development of *B&W 2*. Some of the changes planned for the sequel are straightforward: better creature AI and better graphics. But the biggest change planned is to the concept of the game itself with the addition of war. This will give the game a tighter focus on strategy as you guide your chosen tribe in battles against neighbouring villages, while still using your highly intelligent creature at every step of the way.**

There are a couple of other features in the pipeline (creature clothing, better lip-sync) but, thanks to its success, Lionhead can take its time and leave ideas for a second sequel rather than trying to fit it all in one game.

REVIEWS

ALL THE LATEST GAMES REVIEWED & RATED

A New Hope

REVIEWS EDITOR Martin Korda

A long time ago, in a games shop far far away...

There was once a time when *Star Wars* games were the champions of all that was good and great in the industry. They ruled the charts with their quality and upheld the highest gaming values such as playability and entertainment. Then along came the bleak years, where a terrible darkness descended over the licence as it was seduced by the Dark Side of the gaming industry. *Star Wars* games forgot all that was good and virtuous, and turned their backs on those who relied on them to bring happiness and entertainment to their lives. Instead they became cheap, badly thought-out cash-ins, stealing the beauty and quality of the *Star Wars* licence until it became little more than a memory. But among all of this, there was one who would lead the way back, one who would once again harness the power of the franchise, and lead it against the evil that had befallen all *Star Wars*-related PC games. From nowhere, it has emerged to pave the way forward to a brighter future, giving a new hope to fans everywhere. It is a return to form for both *Star Wars* games and LucasArts. *Star Wars: Galactic Battlegrounds* has arrived, but will it bring with it a *Star Wars* games revival? Find out all our thoughts by turning to page 66 and reading our World Exclusive review.

Speaking of science-fiction RTS, we've also got a World Exclusive review of Fever Pitch Studios' first game, the excellent *Conquest: Frontier Wars*, on page 72 and the first review of *Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2: Yuri's Revenge* on page 76, both of which have proved to be hugely entertaining affairs. And as with *Galactic Battlegrounds*, they're both examples of gameplay triumphing over flashy graphics.

If RTS isn't your thing then how about a comic book inspired action game (page 74), a superb F1 game which caters for the needs of arcade racing fans just as much as for hardcore simulation fanatics (page 78), a beautiful-looking but shallow flick screen adventure (page 80) or an action/adventure of a recent big budget film (page 82)? And that's just for starters, as there really is something for everyone this month. But the only way you'll find something you'll like is to start turning the pages. So go on, off you go... Are you still here?

MOST WANTED... RTS

EMPIRE EARTH
Vivendi • ETA November 2001

BATTLE REALMS
Ubi Soft • ETA December 2001

IMPERIUM GALACTICA III
CDV • ETA winter 2001

SIGMA
Microsoft • ETA winter 2001

WARRIOR KINGS
Microids • ETA February 2002

WARCRAFT III
Vivendi • ETA Q1 2002

AGE OF MYTHOLOGY
Microsoft • ETA spring 2002

REPUBLIC: THE REVOLUTION
Eidos • ETA spring 2002

PRAETORIANS
Eidos • ETA June 2002

CRUSADER: TOTAL WAR
Electronic Arts • ETA TBC

WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call:

Acclaim 020 7344 5000 • **Activision** 08705 143525 • **CDV** 020 8880 4144 • **Codemasters** 01926 814132 • **Eidos Interactive** 020 8636 3000 • **Electronic Arts** 01932 450134 • **Empire Interactive** 020 8343 7337 • **EON** 0700 4366344 • **Infogrames** 0161 837 8000 • **Interplay** 020 7551 4222 • **Koch Media** 01256 707 767 • **Microids** 01908 223 377 • **Microsoft** 08457 002 000 • **Midas** 01279 858000 • **Novalogic** 020 7324 8900 • **Rage Software** 0151 237 2200 • **Take 2 Interactive** 01753 854 444 • **THQ** 01483 767656 • **Ubi Soft** 01932 838 230 • **Virgin Interactive** 020 7551 4266 • **Vivendi** 01189 209100

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

90-100% If a game receives a Classic award in *PC ZONE* you know that it's going to be brilliant. We reward originality and innovation, but we also rate games that take an existing genre to new heights. It's the experience that counts – if it delivers top-notch entertainment, we'll stamp it with our seal of approval and you should go out and buy it.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

80-89% We don't give out 90% scores willy-nilly and this means that there's a mass of superb games that miss out on the Classic rating. This is where the Award of Excellence comes in, an accolade for a game that we believe is far superior to others in the genre.

PC ZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

70-79% Our reviews are much more than just a number at the end. If a game scores in this category it's well worth a punt and provides quality entertainment, but make sure you read the text to see why we didn't think it was worthy of an Award of Excellence.

50-69% We score all our games from a full percentage which means that a score of 50% is an average game – worth considering if you're bored with life and there's no football on the television. Take this closer to the 70% mark and you're looking at a quality game with the ability to impress.

20-49% These games just about manage to keep their heads above the excrement, but only just and shouldn't be considered unless you've exhausted every other avenue. Why should you waste your time playing games that are sub-standard or below average? You're better off with one of our cover discs.

0-19% Incompetence, sloth or just a desire to cash in and make an easy buck? Either way, there are no excuses for these games. Avoid at all costs and if possible make a mental note of the developer's name and stick it on your blacklist.

PC ZONE PANTS

MEET THE TEAM

All *PC ZONE*'s reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a fan of the genre

DAVE WOODS
GENRE FPS, RPG, arcade
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Wolfenstein Multiplayer Test*

RICHIE SHOEMAKER
GENRE Parenthood
CURRENTLY PLAYING Happy families

What's your favourite piece of *Star Wars* hardware?

The USS Enterprise

There's no match for a good blaster

STAR WARS

Star Wars: Galactic Battlegrounds shines through

P.66

BUDGET ZONE

Some cheap and cheerfuls to keep you going

P.106

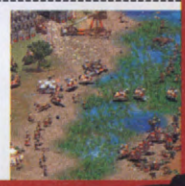
FEEDBACK

Voice your opinion on the latest games

P.108

REALITY CHECK

Steve Hill compares re-enactment to RTS



P.110

REVIEWS POLICY

We're on this planet to serve you. You need to know which games are worth buying, which ones are worth considering for a rainy day and which ones you should point at and laugh. For that reason, *PC ZONE* works a little differently to any other games magazine.

FINISHED CODE

We only review finished code which is released by the publisher. On occasions this means reviewing from gold masters, but this still means that what we see is what you get in the box.

HONEST REVIEWING

If there are problems with a game we'll tell you about them even if it means falling foul of some of the big names in the industry. We're not in print to serve as an advertising tool to publishers or big name developers with an ego problem, we're here to give you our honest opinions of a game.

THE REVIEWERS

Our reviewers are the best in the industry both in terms of experience and ability. We also make sure that every game is reviewed by an expert in the field. You won't find an RTS being reviewed by an FPS fan, and you can be sure that the person reviewing a game has played all the benchmark titles and knows how each game stands up in the face of the bigger picture.

THE MACHINES

We test out the games we review across a variety of different machines and graphics cards. In our office we have access to a wider range of machines from the lowly P233 to the 1.4GHz behemoth. If we spot any aberrations between developer claims and real-life testing we'll let you know.

ONLINE GAMING

We review a lot of games before they go on sale, which means that it's impossible to properly review the online side of a game simultaneously. Instead of taking a wild guess, or testing it on the comfort of the office LAN, we'll wait until servers are running and then revisit the game in our dedicated online section.

DISAGREE?

After all this you might still disagree with us. If so then write in and complain to our Feedback section, which is where we give you the chance to have your say and where any rumblings are answered by the individual reviewer.

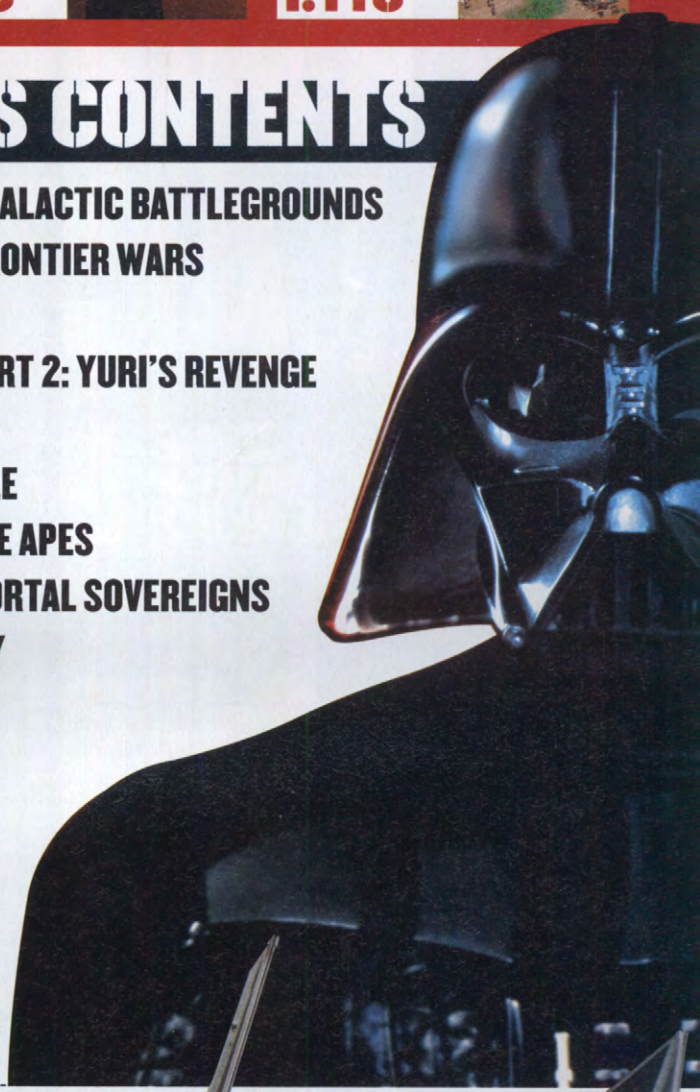
REVIEWS CONTENTS

66 STAR WARS: GALACTIC BATTLEGROUNDS
72 CONQUEST: FRONTIER WARS
74 SPIDER-MAN
76 C&C: RED ALERT 2: YURI'S REVENGE
78 F1 2001
80 MYST III: EXILE
82 PLANET OF THE APES
100 KOHAN: IMMORTAL SOVEREIGNS
102 STAR MONKEY
102 EVIL TWIN
103 DIRECTOR OF FOOTBALL
103 THE WEAKEST LINK
104 TOON CAR
104 PARKEN: IRON STRATEGY

106 BUDGET ZONE
We cast our eyes over the latest arrivals in the bargain bins.

108 FEEDBACK
Your chance to have your say on the games you love and hate the most.

110 REALITY CHECK
Steve Hill gets medieval and compares re-enactment to RTS games.



MARTIN KORDA
GENRE Strategy, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *F1 2001*

Light sabres

ANTHONY HOLDEN
GENRE FPS, action/adventure, arcade
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Wolfenstein Multiplayer Test* and *Come On Baby*

My *Empire Strikes Back* pillow cases

RHIANNA PRATCHETT
GENRE RPG, RTS, adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Throne Of Darkness*

Princess Leia's gold bikini (or is that software?)

MARK HILL
GENRE Adventure, RPG, FPS, strategy
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Baldur's Gate II*

The chess set used by R2D2 and Chewbacca

KEITH PULLIN
GENRE Management, sport, arcade
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Star Wars: Galactic Battlegrounds*

Darth Maul's double light sabre

CHRIS ANDERSON
GENRE Action and adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Neocron Beta*

Star Destroyers because they look evil

STAR WARS: GALACTIC BATTLI

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

£34.99 • Activision • Out November

Keith Pullin struggles to come up with a heading involving the death of Jar Jar Binks, but doesn't manage it in the end

Learning from previous mistakes that may or may not involve the words 'Force' and 'Commander', LucasArts has taken the unprecedented step of using someone else's technology to get back on track in their latest foray into the *Star Wars* universe. And quite a tidy little job it is too. *Star Wars: Galactic Battlegrounds* combines Ensemble's *Age Of Kings* engine with the most popular sci-fi brand on the planet, to produce a real-time strategy experience fit for Yoda himself.

IS THIS REALLY HAPPENING?

If you're a *Star Wars* fan, it's sheer heaven. Name a character from any of the films – *Galactic Battlegrounds* has them. Name your favourite battle scene – *GB* has it. In fact, just to prove that they've left nothing out there's a handy databank on the main menu which contains details on everybody and everything in the game, not to mention profiles of all the races. No doubt about it, LucasArts has crammed in every last detail, but it didn't have an engine to program so it had some time to play with.

And time is what *GB* is all about. This epic journey through the history of the *Star Wars* universe contains six campaigns that each focus on a particular race. Wookiees, Rebel Alliance, Gungans, Galactic Empire, Trade Federation and The Royal Naboo all get their share of glory in equal amounts – it's what you might call galactic equality.

A rebel airbase feels the wrath of Lord Vader.

SETTING ASIDE DIFFERENCES

One thing we were promised with *GB* was that each civilisation would have unique tactical strengths and weaknesses. Thankfully we haven't been disappointed. The Gungans for example are not the greatest of flyers and don't pack anywhere near the overall high-tech strike power of the Trade Federation. When it comes to long-range artillery attacks though, the sneaky Gungans are the undisputed masters. These irritating floppy-eared kids' favourite are also the only race capable of building underwater cities. While this proves handy in setting up the ultimate secret base, it also means the Gungans possess wicked Bongo submarine stealth units, by far the best Naval force in the game.

And then you have the air superiority of the Empire. Any *Star Wars* fan knows the Empire has no equal when it comes to flying around hurting people. The Rebel Alliance meanwhile can produce Jedi Knights who are fearsome in close-combat situations and also act as priests by converting enemies. Only Wookiee berserkers and Sith Lords come close to matching the Jedi's fighting prowess.

ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR

But the big question is does it all balance? The only true way to test this is by pitching races from different eras against each other in a multiplayer or skirmish game.

Here you get the chance to utterly annihilate every last Gungan with a squadron of TIE fighters, or watch the fur fly as Wookiees and Gungans tear each other to pieces. After numerous tests, the most joyful of which involved painful experiments on Gungans, we concluded the balance was pretty much spot on.

So what of this *AoK* engine? The truth is, it does the job and nothing more. Food, carbon, ore and Nova Crystals have directly replaced the food, wood, stone and gold resources of *AoK*. Bases are established by collecting these resources to construct new buildings and units. And again, the familiar process of advancing up through the four tech levels makes for some often frantic yet always focused base expansion.

GB also utilises *AoK*'s superb combat system, which relies heavily on using the right units for the right jobs and not just throwing everything into

GROUNDS

"If you're the kind of person who enjoys rippling water and the odd swaying tree with their strategy games, you'll feel pretty gutted with this"

Knock before entering.

the mix at once. You also need to think about the numerous unit and building upgrades; decisions on whether to upgrade armour, speed, accuracy or damage are a major part of your tactics. There's also scope for trading resources between allies as well as a bit of light diplomacy thrown in for good measure.

LUCAS AREN'T EVERYTHING

As well as tactical differences, *GB* has plenty of graphical variety between the races. Building architecture epitomises this by emphasising the personality of its home race. All Empire

"Gungan cities have an ethereal, bubbly look that makes you want to punch them"

KING FOR A DAY

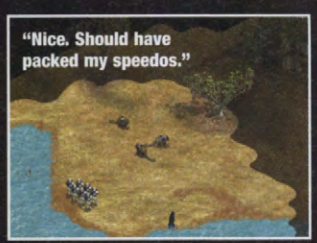
Clearly the *AoK* engine will bring quality to any RTS game, but there's still plenty lacking. It would have been nice to see a few multi-map missions; alas the *AoK* technology doesn't appear to allow it. With this being such a massive feature of *Earth 2150* and more recently *Conquest: Frontier Wars* you have to say it's a major failing. Supply routes and ammunition refills are also non-existent; yet this is another angle more ambitious RTS developers have been experimenting with for quite a while.

Finally pathfinding on large groups of slow-moving units (and for some reason artillery in particular) is often quite wayward. Why does this keep happening? Surely developers have sussed the art of moving a blob safely from one side of the screen to the other by now. You may also be interested to know that your units can occasionally get blocked in by computer-controlled allies. At one point a Gungan grenade-thrower stood frozen for about half an hour between two buildings before letting my Jedi Knight pass.

constructions for example are very angular. Rebel buildings have very soft edges, and Gungan cities all have a kind of ethereal, bubbly look to them that makes you want to punch them repeatedly over and over again until they fall down.

That said, the graphics are not particularly pleasant. LucasArts has opted for only 256 colours in order to have more units on screen at once. While on one hand this allows for the kind of battles *Star Wars* is famous for without your processor grinding to a halt and screaming for sweet mercy, the downside is that frankly it can look a bit shit – even if there are more than 300 different unit types.

It goes without saying that if you're the kind of person who enjoys rippling water and the odd swaying tree with their strategy games, you'll feel pretty gutted with this. Large explosions are the only real notable graphical wonder, although the shimmering and dazzling display of the shield generator comes a close second.



The amount of technology and upgrades available is staggering.

There are around 16 different planets in total, including this little visit to Cloud City.

This is what happens when a Wookiee loses his temper.

On the plus side you don't need a graphics accelerator card to play it. Though considerate to those select few who still run their PCs with some kind of medieval configuration, it's basically a hollow gesture for the rest of us who were forced into that essential hardware purchase years ago.

MINIATURE MONSTERS

You have to say more was expected in terms of scale too. The AT-ATs are much smaller than they should be compared to stormtroopers and other ground units. There are also no Imperial Star Destroyers, and you can only assume this is in part due to the scale problems such a gigantic spaceship would create.

The similarity of some units (most notably droid workers and droid troopers) is a more serious flaw. Using a magnifying glass to work out who's got a gun and who's got a plum can take up valuable seconds on the battlefield. If you're sensible you'll assign your troopers to squadrons before you send them into battle. You'll then make use of the rudimentary behavioural commands and hopefully avoid any drag-and-grab calamities.

As you would imagine there are no problems with the sound. The *Star Wars* theme races along whenever it gets the opportunity and the thousands of voice samples (a mixture of original and acted) add atmosphere as well as a few unintentional

SITTING ON THE DOCK OF THE BAY

One of the fascinating things about *Star Wars* is the different kind of vehicles used by the various races. Here's a quick look at some of the rarer and more famous transportation methods featured in *Galactic Battlegrounds*

DARTH MAUL'S SHIP

Darth Maul turning up in any old banger just wouldn't have been the same. So, the Sith Lord's personal shuttle is just one of the specialist spacecraft included in *GB* to beef up the atmosphere. This nifty piece of technology is also one of the few spaceships in the game to possess a cloaking device.

QUEEN AMADALA'S SHIP

The big shiny ship from *Episode 1* has to be one of the sleekest-looking spacecraft ever seen in the *Star Wars* universe. Apparently it's also the most advanced ship ever built and can travel faster than even our next offering...

MILLENNIUM FALCON

As everyone knows, this Corellian class freighter was made famous by Han Solo and his walking carpet sidekick Chewbacca. In early versions of the game Lando Calrissian piloted the Falcon, however after chatting with *GB*'s producer, *PC ZONE* managed to convince the developers to go with Han instead.

EWOK GLIDER

It may not be at the forefront of galactic technology but the Ewok Glider still has a role to play. Best employed on home ground from a high elevation, the glider is highly effective as a bomber unit and can even take out powerful battledroid units despite its apparent flimsiness.

AT-AT

Though not quite as impressive as they should be due to the scaled-down size, the AT-ATs in *GB* are still a handful for any opposing army. However, in homage to the original *Star Wars* film, a swarm of Rebel snowspeeders can easily dispatch these giant walkers.

TIE DEFENDER

The only reason this unit ever made it into the game was because fans demanded it. Apparently LucasArts were so overwhelmed by the number of requests they finally caved in and decided to deliver exactly what the fans wanted. Shame they never capitulated in the same way when it came to including Imperial Star Destroyers. Ho hum.

WALKTHROUGH

END

CHEWIE NOT CHALKY

One of the tutorial levels requires you to go and destroy an enemy fortress. As usual though, things aren't quite as simple as they seem

1 First of all you need to build up your base. Make sure you have defences in place before venturing out and if possible set up a shield generator as seen here.

2 With your base secure you must dispatch a likely-looking army to go and find the enemy fortress. The Wookiees are great hand-to-hand fighters so be prepared to make the most of their strength.

3 Once you've found the enemy base, break into it by attacking its weakest point. Avoid the gates if you can as they are usually tougher than the surrounding walls and are also well guarded.

4 Inside the enemy stronghold take out the Command Centre first. This weakens your foes and gives you control of the area. Finally destroy the fortress. With the job done Chewbacca and co should make it home for dinner.

The Royal Naboo wake up to another Federation attack.

The timeline shows how well you fared on the previous mission.

Droids simply weren't designed to take out laser turrets.

laughs. Darth Vader gets all the best lines of course. At one point he throttles a particularly dense officer to death for misunderstanding orders and then icily asks: "Does that make things any clearer for you?"

STARS IN THEIR EYES

GB closely tracks major characters and scenes from all four *Star Wars* films: Han, Chewie, Luke and all the traditional favourites are there. LucasArts has also managed to squeeze in some original missions of their own creation. The resulting mix is a pleasant blend of 'fact' and 'fiction'. As well as reliving the exhilarating Battle of Hoth you can enjoy a more rustic experience in the company of Wookiees – an experience that can only be described as 'velvety with a hint of figs'.

Each campaign contains around seven varying missions. Subtler missions such as escorting Naboo's Nibian bombers with a squadron of N1-starfighters or finding five animals for a Gungan feast sit comfortably alongside the usual fare of resource-collecting and base-building. Add to this the hugely atmospheric ground battles such as the aforementioned scrap on Hoth, as well as the Gungans climatic ruck versus the Trade Federation on Naboo and you've got some fairly interesting scenarios to deal with.

Those with astute eyesight may even notice the larger than necessary gap on the campaign menu screen between *Episode I* (*The Phantom Menace*) and *Episode IV* (*Star Wars: A New Hope*), so expect a timely add-on pack when the next film instalment hits our cinemas.

STAR WARS MANIA

Galactic Battlegrounds is unlikely to win any awards for originality, but that's not what this game is about. *GB*'s strength lies in its tried-and-tested gameplay, massive variety of missions and richly detailed universe. Throwing in a scenario and map editor for good measure is also sure to add to the multiplayer side of things, as well as improve the longevity in general. It's also a coup for *Star Wars* anoraks; if you ever wanted to recreate the Deathstar or pitch an army of Sith against an army of Jedi (and we know you're out there) now is your chance.

GB may not reach the same levels of depth as *Earth 2150* or *Conquest: Frontier Wars*, but when it comes to sheer playability it's easily up there with *Red Alert 2*. *Galactic Battlegrounds* is a fine RTS game and one of the best *Star Wars* games to grace the PC in a long time. PCZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

Galactic Battlegrounds really is *AoE2* with *Star Wars* graphics – which subsequently makes it a very good game indeed. A few more innovative elements such as supply lines and slightly better graphics would have been welcome, but what the hell – there's gameplay here in abundance and that's what counts.

Star Wars: Galactic Battlegrounds

Red Alert 2

Earth 2150 & The Moon Project

Conquest: Frontier Wars

Star Wars: Force Commander

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P300 **Memory** 32Mb RAM, 450 Mb on HD required **WE SAY** A PIII 600 should kill any lingering remnants of slowdown. 64Mb RAM helps too

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Tried-and-tested *AoE* gameplay • Hundreds of ground, sea and air units • Six hugely interesting and varied races • Good mixture of both stealth and base-building • Scenario editor

DOWNERS Functional graphics • Pathfinding can prove troublesome • Lacks depth in places

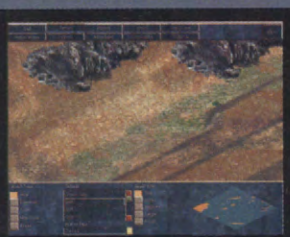
84 *Star Wars* strikes back

LEVEL EDITOR GUIDE

END

SHAPE YOUR DESTINY

LucasArts' decision to include a scenario and map editor means that hundreds of Death Stars are about to hit the Internet. Here we attempt to recreate a famous *Star Wars* scene of our own. Can you guess what it is?


1 First we shape the hillside and make sure there are plenty of rocks strewn around.

2 Next we throw in a few Tuscan Raiders as well as a lost droid.

3 On the other side of the map it's time to build a small farming settlement.

4 Finally we place C3PO and Luke Skywalker next to the farm ready to go off in search of the aforementioned droid. The rest, as they say, is history...

AGE of EMPIRES II®

GOLD EDITION

FORGE AN EMPIRE THAT SPANS THE AGES

LEAD YOUR CIVILIZATION TO GLORY ACROSS A THOUSAND YEARS OF REAL-TIME STRATEGY

*

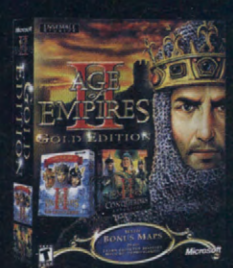
HISTORIC CAMPAIGNS FROM WILLIAM WALLACE AND JOAN OF ARC TO ATTILA THE HUN AND EL CID

*

18 CIVILIZATIONS ALL WITH UNIQUE UNITS AND TECHNOLOGIES

*

INCLUDES BONUS MAPS, LEARN FROM THE MASTERS PRE-RECORDED GAMES AND ADDITIONAL CONTENT



ENSEMBLE STUDIOS

© 2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft and the Microsoft logo are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the US and/or other countries.

Microsoft®

www.age2gold.co.uk

CONQUEST: FRONTIER WARS

£29.99 • Ubi Soft • Out November 9

Keith Pullin conquers the universe with no help from his front ear or back ear for that matter

PC ZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

On the surface *Conquest: Frontier Wars* is a throwback to the days of *Starcraft* and *Red Alert*. Looking minimalist in every sense of the word this space odyssey conspires to hide its best attributes for as long as possible.

The introduction sequence certainly does little to get your juices flowing; watching a puny Terran spaceship get pulverised by a monstrous alien juggernaut is fairly standard procedure in sci-fi plots.

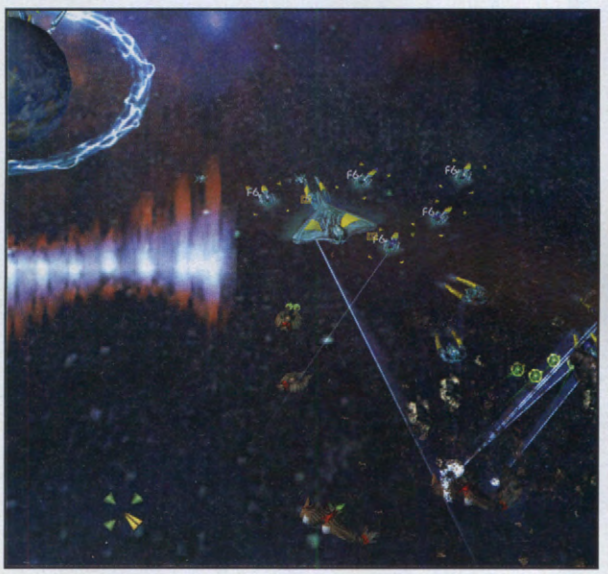
The ensuing story involving humans poking their noses into an alien war that frankly doesn't concern them, is again relatively orthodox RTS escapism. It also has to be said that including just a single human campaign is pretty lazy. Why the warring Mantis (an evolved insect race) and Celarons (a collective energy mass) are not worthy of having the story told from their perspective is a mystery. But that's not to say you can't experience life as an alien; both the quick battle mode and the multiplayer game at least allow you that honour.

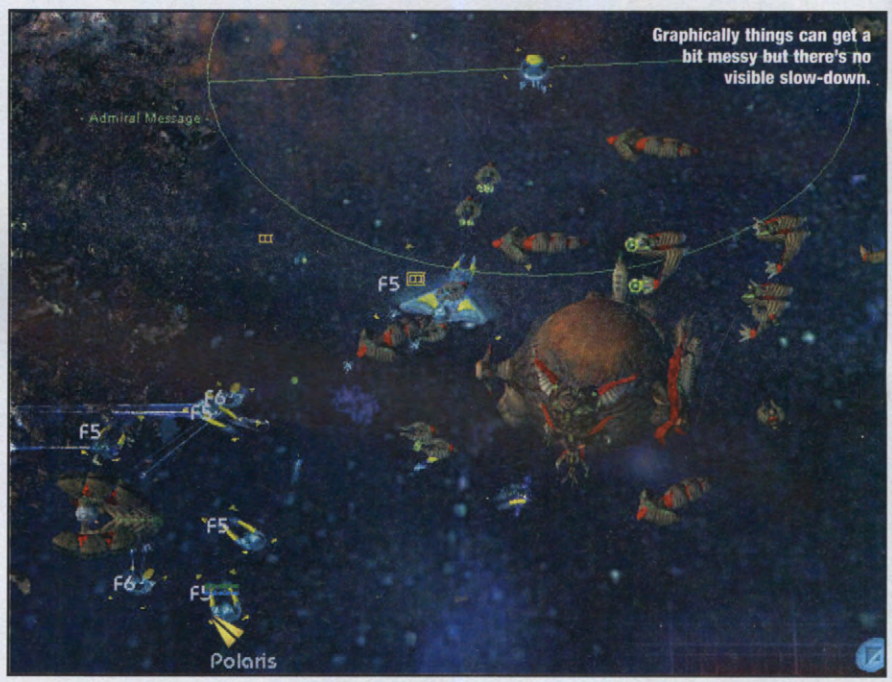
TOO MUCH

But like we said – that's only the surface… One of the reasons why *Conquest* is so good is because it introduces new gameplay

Each race will leave its distinctive mark on any planet they conquer.

"Just when you think you've seen it all, along comes something bigger, better and more powerful"


The wily Mantis try and seek refuge in an asteroid belt.



Graphically things can get a bit messy but there's no visible slow-down.

Now that's what you call a weapon.

WALKTHROUGH

MARK OF RESPECT

Only when you look closley at the graphics do you realise how detailed they truly are. In the following sequence a spacecraft feels the brunt of some real-time damage before it ruptures and explodes

1 A couple of tiny alien fighters fancy their chances.

2 They manage to inflict serious damage upon the mighty Admiral's already wounded ship.

elements throughout the game at just the right time. It also knows when to raise the stakes that little bit higher, and most importantly, it provides you with a reward every time you dig deeper.

Take collecting resources for example. Unlike some space-based RTS games where you monotonously search for one resource, *Conquest* contains three; ore, gas and crew must be found in order to construct your headquarters, refineries, shipyards, spacecraft and upgrades etc. This means the gameplay emphasis is constantly shifting from one resource to another and lends to the feeling that you have to be analytical in what you can or can't build. Command Points (CPs) are also awarded for expanding your empire, but should you run out of CPs, manufacturing stops.

The different races also have different resource requirements allowing scope for plenty of underhanded tactics should you feel the need. It's worth noting that the tech tree for all three races is enormous. Just when you think you've seen it all, along comes something bigger, better and more powerful.

This is none more evident than when you build a Naval Academy (or alien equivalent) and suddenly find you have six Admirals ready to kick arse. These computer-controlled fly-boy heavyweights will command an entire fleet in the style that suits their personality. It effectively means that all ships under the command of this AI Admiral reach a new level of intelligence and even go so far as to prioritise targets, cover each other and retreat when the odds are weak.

inspection reveals more than you bargained for. The spectacular 3D dogfights boast real-time damage, smoke trails on wounded craft and some great explosions. The slick under-construction animations are also notable for their individuality depending on the race you are playing as. Sound is nothing to shout about but doesn't impair the overall feel of the game.

One part of *Conquest* that would worry anyone is the way missions are played over several

"Complex as it sounds, the interface does its job beautifully and allows you to flick from one system to another effortlessly"

Conquest is full of surprises, in fact, playing it is like bursting a really big pussy spot: just when you think you've squeezed everything out, along comes some more. Then later on, some more… and then some more… Suddenly it's easy to see why this game has taken four years to create. The depth is stunning.

JUMPING WORMS

Aesthetically, things aren't quite as impressive, but again, closer

systems at once linked via wormholes. Complex as it sounds, the interface does its job beautifully and allows you to flick from one system to another effortlessly. Multiple systems also mean the implementation of supply lines. By placing jump gates on wormholes, you are effectively seizing control of the system and establishing a supply line, which gives you access to resources throughout your empire. However, if your jump

They're harvestable for gas but Nebulas have a strange effect on ships.

Creating fleets is one of *Conquest*'s most impressive and important points.

gate is destroyed the supply is cut and you must rely on the resources in that system alone. It may not sound like much but one broken link can have numerous and far reaching repercussions, especially if you have a stranded fleet in need of immediate repair and resupply.

KING OF THE WILD FRONTIER

Incredibly, with so much going on and so many potential complexities *Conquest* is one of the easiest 'pick up and play' strategy games we have ever come across. Obviously there are failings when it comes to the plot, lack of campaigns and to a certain extent graphically, but don't let any of that or its immense depth put you off. *Conquest* is a quality game that will force established RTS designers all over the world to sit up and pay very close attention indeed. There can be no doubt about it; *Conquest: Frontier Wars* is a true star. PCZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

Despite nicking ideas from *Homeworld*, *Starcraft*, *Ground Control* and many more games, *Conquest* has enough style, gameplay and originality to keep anyone enthralled. A polished effort and well worth the four year wait (if we'd actually been waiting for it…)

CONQUEST: FRONTIER WARS

GROUND CONTROL

HOMEWORLD

EARTH 2150

THE MOON PROJECT

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** PII 400 **Memory** 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 450Mb HD Space, 4Mb 3D accelerator card **WE SAY** PIII 750 with 64Mb RAM and 16Mb 3D card

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Masterful gameplay • Superbly honed interface • Brilliant supply line and fleet ideas • Nice real-time damage on spaceships • Great depth

DOWNERS A bit nerdy and complex for some • Aesthetics aren't great • Unoriginal storyline

82 Space with pace

END

3 The damage quickly spreads and the Admiral is forced to abandon ship in his escape pod.

4 In the nick of time the Admiral floats clear as the massive cruiser explodes.

5 The devastated hull is torn in two and the pieces float into the darkness of space.

Everyone's favourite symbiote gets a pasting from the web-crawler.

Look at that fog. Shocking.

"Careful with that horn, buddy."

"Is it because I is black?" You can play in different costumes with different powers.

SPIDER-MAN

£29.99 • Activision • Out now

Peter Parker: wall crawler. *James Lyon*: flesh crawler. Just read the review, dammit

Meanwhile, back at the office... Plunging straight into questions of authenticity, this is a game that truly answers the calling for genuine comic book thrills. All the elements are there: the corny wise-cracks, the larger than life superheroes, the ruthlessly inefficient villains.

Spider-Man, in particular, looks fantastic in his transition into 3D and executes his plethora of moves just as would be expected of him. The supporting cast and characters carry off their own distinctive stylings quite well, bringing more to mind the recent Saturday morning cartoon than anything else.

The levels themselves don't hold up quite so well, though. While projecting an adequate comic-book feel, they are still a little bland sometimes. Because of the game's console origins, of course, and we knew from the start that they weren't going to make major improvements, but it seems a shame when the PC is capable of a lot more detail. Still, that's something we're going to have to live with, so we might as well look at the game itself.

Trap enemies in your webbing. Nice.

THE SUPPORTING CAST

In a genre that doesn't rely heavily on plot, don't expect anything too substantial. While the story draws its influences from the comic, it's basically just an excuse to shove in a handful of differently themed levels leading to a fair few rapidly-skewed plot U-turns along the way. It's self-contained and plays out more like a 'best of' collection than something that carries on the continuity of the comics. No bad thing, of course, and at least they concede to the introduction of something moderately new at the end for fans. With an array of villains throughout the years, they were spoilt for choice when deciding who to include, but most of the more well-known names manage to squeeze themselves in, from Doctor Octopus, Venom and Mysterio, with others like The Green Goblin, Sandman and Kingpin probably being reserved for sequels.

For the truly devoted, there are even a few cameo appearances that integrate the game firmly in the Marvel Universe. The more confusing issues of Spider-Man continuity are explained in brief through the main menu. It isn't necessary to understand completely what's happening to enjoy the game, but it helps that they've put it in to stop *Spider-Man* newbies feeling confused over what exactly a symbiote is and why there's a man-sized lizard in a lab coat lurking in the sewers. As well as heroes like The Punisher and Daredevil appearing in cut-scenes, you can expect to see throwaway references dotted around the levels in the form of billboards and other things. All topped off nicely by the charming voice of ubiquitous doyen, Stan Lee, introducing the game in his inimitable style.

"It isn't necessary to understand what's happening to enjoy the game"

DON'T MAKE MINE MARVEL

And it flows on a downhill gradient from there. Spider-Man's ability to crawl on any surface may look good but, unfortunately, it's hard to control the way you're supposed to move because of the awkward camera. In fact, the whole game is plagued by this problem: it's too slow in trying to keep up with all the action. Especially during the web-swinging levels, where the ability to break off and swing in a different direction is compounded by your lack of vision. The camera adjusts itself automatically but there's no way to stop it and control it yourself, and because of this, the frustration factor is raised considerably.

Marks then for the auto-targeting feature, which when fighting does something to alleviate this tardy camera problem. Not a lot mind you, but it helps. Likewise, shooting webs – Spider-Man intelligently targets the closest wall without difficulty, but trying to see it yourself is a different matter entirely, if you don't adjust yourself or enter the ponderous target mode.

Spot the in-joke.

Spider-Man can crawl on any surface – even upside down.

"This is the worst piggy-back I've ever had."

Talking about keeping it simple, yep, you guessed it: it's way too easy. There are four difficulty modes but even the hardest setting doesn't take long to complete. That isn't to say it's not possible to die, because it is, rather it's the brevity of the levels themselves. There are 34 levels but most feel too short, some even seem like part of a level split by a short cut-scene. You don't have any lives to speak of, but unlimited continues mean you can soon get past any tricky sections.

What it does have, though, is a welcome attempt at variety. What this means is one level will see you swinging through New York being chased over rooftops by a police chopper, another fighting your way over the top of a train, and a third defeating one of the bosses. While not as mixed as it likes to think it is, it allows you to fully utilise Spider-Man's powers. The main fighting operates on a sub-Final Fight style level, with a high degree of mindless fist-and-forget non-tactical swedging going on.

EXCELSIOR

Completing the game comes all too soon. There's an option to go back and play again, to find costumes and comics hidden throughout the levels, but this doesn't take long either. The latter gives access to a gallery of old issue covers and a brief synopsis of their plots. For those interested in the history of the comic they're worth collecting. Then again, it might have been better if they'd showed some of the actual pages inside. As a side note, they don't look that clear either, and could've been put in a higher resolution.

So, it's another console game transition that adds nothing new apart from a higher resolution and mouse support in the main menu. The complete lack of opportunity to fix the camera, is a bit of a disappointment. The same goes with the ease of play. Which is a shame because, as a comic book game, it's one of the best around. It just helps if you can see what you're doing most of the time. PZ

See what I was saying about the levels?

IT'S A GRAPHIC NOVEL, ACTUALLY

If you think game players have it bad, spare a thought for comic fans

Despite a slew of big movies to their credit, high-quality comics over here are still consigned to out-of-the-way shops or the Internet. But if you do decide to make the effort, here are a few recommendations.

PREACHER

One of the comics of the '90s. A high-concept tale of a hard-bitten preacher on a quest to find God, it's much, much more than that. Traversing comedy, betrayal, over-the-top violence and a high streak of American values, Garth Ennis' opus deserves to be bought immediately. The same team are currently writing *Punisher*.

THE NEW X-MEN

Recently joined by Grant Morrison, the man behind conspiracy comic *The Invisibles*. After a few years of growing a bit stale, Morrison's minor revamp blows fresh air on a more focused structure and ideology.

TOP 10

Alan Moore, writer of *Watchmen*, one of the finest miniseries ever, returns with a new collection of titles to his name. Top 10 reads like *Hill Street Blues* in a city full of superheroes. It's heavy on the dialogue but it's still an absorbing read. See also the slightly similar, but more diverse *Powers* by Brian Michael Bendis. Also look out for *Tomorrow Stories* and *Promethea* by Moore.

Also worth a look: *Transmetropolitan*, *The Authority* and *Sandman*.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Reminds me a bit of *Soul Reaver* except that had a controllable camera. *Sheep, Dog 'N' Wolf* is also too easy but a lot of fun. *Tomb Raider* proved the serious 3D platformer could be a sales success.

Spider-Man

Soul Reaver

Sheep, Dog 'N' Wolf

Tomb Raider

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266 Memory 64Mb RAM, 200Mb HD Space **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D Card **WE SAY** P333 and a joypad

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Designed for the fans • Great main character • Variety in levels

DOWNERS Shoddy camera • Too short • Nothing new

76 Comic book authenticity let down by major camera faults

Cower at Yuri's wibbly wobbly powers.

One million dollars!

Tany and Eieny are back with a vengeance.

A bit of a dinosaur emergency.

Build a strong base, you're going to need it.

RED ALERT 2: YURI'S REVENGE

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

★ £19.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

Rhianna Pratchett thought Yuri's revenge was something that only happened after 27 vodkas. Turns out she was wrong

So you thought the war was over in *Red Alert 2*? Well you obviously weren't paying attention to a certain balding Soviet military advisor. That Mr Yuri who talks in whispers, never blinks and is just one white fluffy cat short of being a villainous stereotype. Now it turns out the whole time Yuri's been secretly devising his own plan for world domination by developing mind-control technologies. How could they not have seen that one coming? But then Westwood games have always been a haven for the unhinged and this latest expansion, *Red Alert 2: Yuri's Revenge*, should probably be dumped in a rubber-padded cell and fed on a diet of jelly and damp biscuits until it learns to be a civilised member of society.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Most Westwood fans were bitterly disappointed by *C&C: Tiberian Sun* but *Red Alert 2* put the smile back on their faces and *Yuri's Revenge* is just going to keep you grinning.

Red Alert 2: Yuri's Revenge

Red Alert 2

C&C: Tiberian Sun

BACK TO BASICS

Red Alert 2 always had more than just an edge over the rather disappointing *C&C: Tiberian Sun*, and although *Yuri's Revenge* is not pushing any of Westwood's boundaries in the way *Emperor: Battle For Dune* tried to, it's still a satisfying expansion. Mainly because it has stuck to the things that have made Westwood's games so damn playable: solid gameplay, absorbing missions, genuine humour and (although we have differing opinions in the office about this), one of the best examples of how FMV can enhance a game.

> **"Mr Yuri never blinks and is one fluffy cat short of being a villainous stereotype"**

THREE'S A CROWD

True, the majority of the work has gone into developing a more *Dune*-like style of gameplay by adding a third side, that of Yuri and his psychic army. Unfortunately you can only play Yuri in multiplayer mode, so you'll be forced to play through the 14 single-player missions as either the Allies and Soviets, pining for a few Slave Miners, Brutes and Virus mercenaries (who fire virus-filled darts that expand enemies to twice their size until they explode in a cloud of noxious fumes).

The missions are classic Westwood fare, although there's even more of an urban feel than in *RA2*, and there are plenty of recognisable cities to run amok in. There's a B-movie-style fight out over the Hollywood sign, a brief spot of Jurassic time travel and the chance to get movie heroes to aid you in a spot of loony-bashing. Other missions take you to the pyramids of Egypt in yet another Einstein rescue mission, to Sydney, Transylvania and even the moon, so you won't have much time to get bored of the scenery.

Yes it does look somewhat dated when compared to some RTS titles that have moved into 3D waters, but then it's an expansion pack so it doesn't really need to break new ground. It just needs to make the ground you're already walking on that much prettier and potholed with sudden surprises – a task *Yuri's Revenge* lives up to admirably. It's been a while since I last played a *C&C* game, but this expansion pack has renewed my zeal for the style and sheer all-round gaming experience of playing a Westwood title. PZ

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 266 **Memory** 64Mb RAM **WE SAY** PII 400 or better and 128Mb RAM

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Challenging missions • Excellent locations • Good music • Full of amusing details

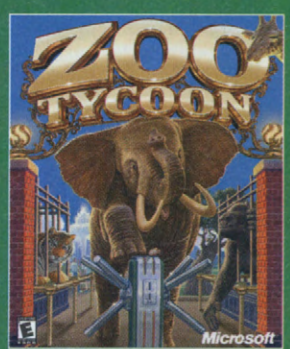
DOWNERS Looking rather dated • Not the place to go if you hate FMVs

80 Ch-ching!

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

But just make sure you don't step in something you shouldn't!

If you think that designing, planning and building your own zoo is fun, just wait until the animals – all 46 species of them – come into play. In Zoo Tycoon™ if you don't have your wits about you at all times, you'll soon be at your wits' end. Monkeys throwing poo when unhappy, tigers escaping from their cages, playing cat and mouse with your visitors, and lions salivating at the prospect of a tasty gazelle for lunch. These are just a few of the scenarios you'll have to contend with if you don't respect the individual needs of your animals, design appropriate habitats and ensure that the cages you build are strong enough to keep some of the more temperamental creatures at bay. Manage your zoo well and it will be popular and profitable. Run it badly and you'll slip up very quickly.



Microsoft®

www.zoo-tycoon.co.uk

© 2001 Microsoft Corporation. Microsoft, Zoo Tycoon and the Microsoft logo are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

This is what *F1 2001* looks like with a P4 and a hefty graphics card...

...and this is what it looks like on a mid-spec machine.

F1 2001

£29.99 • Electronic Arts • Out November 5

It's an F1 game. So it must mean a *Martin Korda* review

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Following on from last year's excellent *F1 Championship: Season 2000*, *F1 2001* takes all the charisma and playability from its predecessor, and improves the formula with a sublime graphical revamp. Driven by a new engine that packs four times as many polygons onto your screen than *Season 2000*, each vehicle is rendered like a work of art on wheels. As always though, there's a...

BUT...

If you want to experience this racer in all its glory you're going to need a machine heftier than a romp between Ann Widdecombe and Frank Butcher, which means a 1Ghz processor, 128Mb RAM and a graphics card packing more speed than Brixton. However, even with a lower end machine you can still enjoy what is undoubtedly the most customisable and entertaining GP game to date.

The beautiful visuals are backed up by some slick presentation in which tracks, cars and drivers are introduced by Jim Rosenthal. Newcomers will find a set of superb tutorials that guide you through each track, demonstrating how to tackle every corner as you spectate from the back of a two-seater F1 car, before you have a go yourself.

However, *F1 2001*'s strongest feature is versatility. Unlike *GP3* with its vat-like quota of complexity and mind-blowing realism, *F1 2001* comes with a set of options that allow you to configure the game exactly to your liking. So if you want, you can spend countless hours poring over your car set-up, shifting your gear ratios, damping, springs, ride height, fuel load and downforce. However, if you're more into the arcade style of racing, simply customise your car on the Basic Set-Up screen, turn on a couple of driving aids, select the behind car viewpoint and get driving. What's more, you can play just as easily from a behind-car viewpoint as you can from the cockpit view, again catering for simulation and arcade fans alike.

"The true beauty of it is that you can make it anything you want it to be, be it arcade, simulation or a mixture of the two"

The most entertaining and customisable F1 game to date.

UP TO DATE

Unlike all of its competitors, *F1 2001* ships with all of this season's teams, drivers and cars. Which of course means you can test yourself against young upstart Montoya and old fart Hakkinen, or drive the ever-improving Jaguar or the always-losing Benetton.

Crap rhyming aside though, the AI has been hugely improved and bares an uncanny resemblance to its real-life counterparts, and you can configure your opponents' aggression depending on your ability. Stick them on low and they'll back off without too much of a fight, while higher aggression levels fall just short of opponents chasing you round the pit lane with a pneumatic drill aimed at your head.

There are however still some bugs that need ironing out, most notably the ridiculous floating car effect when you race from the behind-car viewpoint, and some occasionally dodgy physics which can see your car launch into the air at the merest shunt. Then there's the pit communications. Who the hell came up with those? The babbling idiot on the other end of your earpiece supplies you with useless pieces of information such as: "This is the last lap, don't stop now."

NICE NICHE

F1 2001 is undoubtedly the finest PC F1 game to date. It may lack the depth and utter realism of *GP3*, but crank up the difficulty level far enough, and it isn't that far behind, while the stunning graphics and excellent changeable weather effects make *GP3* look about as attractive as a puddle of birthing fluid. The true beauty of it is that you can make it anything you want it to be, be it arcade, simulation or a mixture of the two, and it willingly obliges in every case.

The problem with most sims is that they're always going to appeal to a niche market. *F1 2001* has broken that mould. Let's hope others follow its lead. PCZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

If you're a simulation or an arcade fan, you should love *F1 2001*, as you can customise it however you like. *GP3* is still the king of realism, but the gap is closing. *F1 Racing Championship* is also worth a look, if you can live with its ridiculously aggressive AI.

TECH SPECS

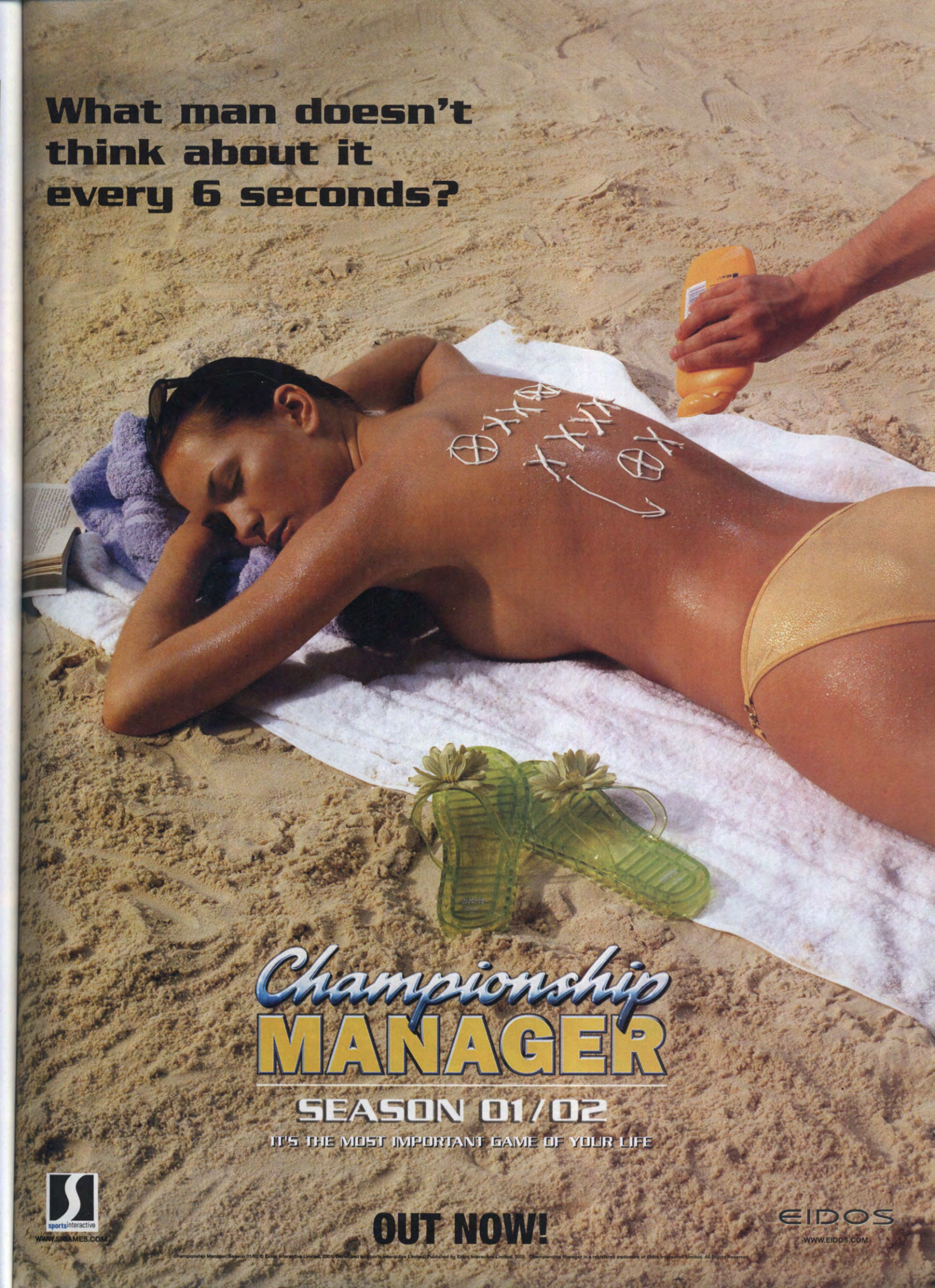
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 333 Memory 64Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 16Mb 3D card **WE SAY** The above specs are taking the piss. A PIII 733 with a 32Mb 3D card will do, but to play it in all its glory, you're looking at a P4 1Ghz, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Best ever graphics for an F1 game • Perfect for both arcade and simulation fans • Hugely customisable • This season's drivers and teams • Excellent tutorials

DOWNERS Needs a very hefty PC • Strange floating effect on vehicles • Poor pit communications • Some slightly off physics

83 Pole position



Championship Manager: Season 01/02 © Eidos Interactive Limited, 2001. Developed by Sports Interactive Limited. Published by Eidos Interactive Limited, 2001. Championship Manager is a registered trademark of Eidos Interactive Limited. All Rights Reserved.

Sob! Imagine if *Half-Life 2* was given graphics of this quality instead of going to waste here.

MYST III: EXILE

£29.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

James Lyon came to visit us but wouldn't make us tea, so we gave him this to review instead

It'd be easy to insult *Exile* just because of its heritage, but like it or not there's a fair few people looking forward to this new edition. Nice then, that this game gives them reason to hate it as well. Y'see, eight years ago, *Myst* vanguarded the sombre age of tedious "atmospheric adventure games". Limited in interaction to rudimentary puzzles, its main, nay its sole draw was its luscious pre-rendered graphics. To make a game look beautiful, though, is easy. To actually have some kind of game underneath seems beyond most. And maybe all those years ago what was put out was adequate, but not now. To release what is essentially the first game with different graphics, not once but twice more is plain old inexcusable.

Again, we have the definition of style over substance. It's hard to deny that the hi-res scenery is among the most astounding in any game so far this year. Locations adopt an esoteric, other-worldly quality and the photo-realistic vistas really do bring a lump to the throat. Being able to move a full 360 degrees in all directions is some improvement (though not an innovation) but your hopes are soon dashed as you click forward and view slideshows as you move to your next location. This isn't just a minor discomfort, as even with freedom of movement in locations, it can often be hard to spot a path – especially in the botanical world where thick undergrowth obscures things.

> **"But beneath this aesthetically pleasing veneer lurks something quite rotten"**

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Of course, it's this surface beauty that'll get trumpeted and that is going to be responsible for the majority of sales, but beneath this aesthetically pleasing veneer lurks something quite rotten. Most of the scenery is largely superfluous with limited hot points to interact with and it's a case of same game, same puzzles; pulling and prodding things in an effort to discover a pattern to unlock the next section. Since the puzzles are localised, there's no real wandering about but it's still difficult to know what you should be doing without randomly clicking on things. Even after I had solved something, I often wasn't sure why I'd done it. A few puzzles refer to reading through notes given to you at the start. Oh-so carelessly dropped diary pages can be picked up in the worlds, though these only contain additional plot points the developers couldn't be bothered portraying through action.

A SIDE ORDER OF HAM

Even the plot doesn't live up to its potential. The excitement of meeting somebody in the first room makes you eager for human contact but this is soon quashed as you become conveniently trapped on an uninhabited island. Your captor torments you a few times but there's absolutely no interaction with him, and you're basically on your own until the end. Which is probably just as well, as the acting can reach truly atrocious levels sometimes, in terms of bile-inducing pathos.

Of course, there's nothing that seriously inhibits play – it's structurally sound in its own context and the day or so it takes to complete is driven by the incentive to experience the look of new locations. However, even fans have to ask themselves if buying exactly the same game with different graphics is a worthwhile purchase. I can understand why people like the sedate pace of the game but you might as well watch a video of the action while filling in a puzzle book. We should have moved on by now. Minor technological developments aside, this is a wasted opportunity to improve the series. They've tried their hardest, but it just goes to show you can't polish a turd. PCZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

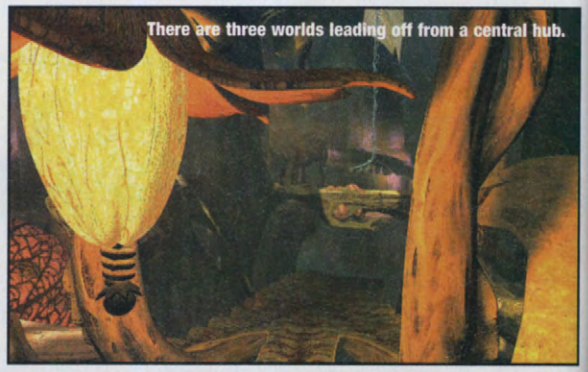
A worthwhile game in this genre? Hard, but probably *Zork: Grand Inquisitor* for not taking itself seriously, and attempting to be more adventure than atmosphere, but you'll be extremely lucky if you can find a copy of it. *Escape From Monkey Island* shows how adventures should be done nowadays. *Atlantis*...doesn't.

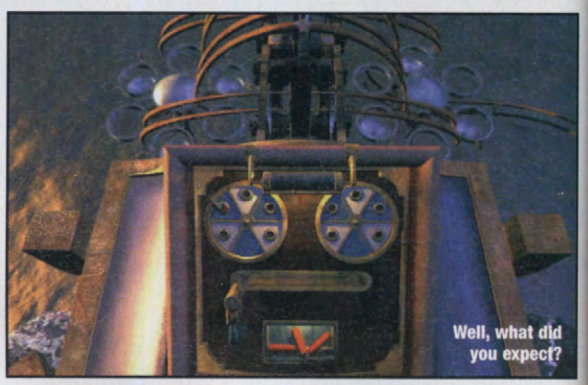
Myst III: Exile

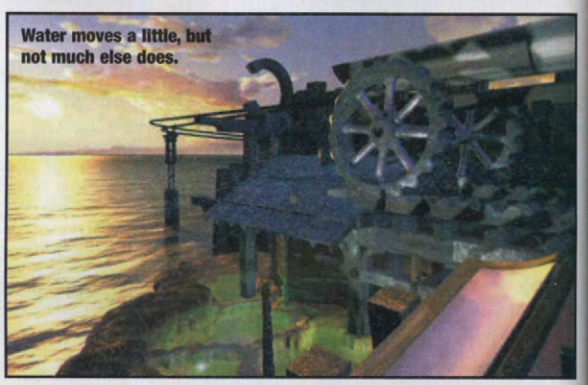
Atlantis

Zork: GI

EFMI


There are three worlds leading off from a central hub.


Well, what did you expect?


Water moves a little, but not much else does.

Aww, look at that. Goes great with chips.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** PII 233MHZ **Memory** 64Mb RAM, 200Mb HD Space **WE SAY** If you just want to look at pretty pictures, it'll run OK

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Gorgeous graphics • Um...

DOWNERS Nothing new • Bad acting • No real substance.

35 Same game, different graphics

SHINJA
SERPENT CLAN

"ONLY STRENGTH AND THE WILLINGNESS TO USE IT CAN PRESERVE US."

UNIT ALCHEMY: THE MARK OF A GREAT WARRIOR IS THE FUSION OF BODY AND MIND. THE UNIT ALCHEMY SYSTEM ALLOWS EVEN A SINGLE PEASANT TO GROW INTO A POWERFUL SAMURAI WARRIOR.

GRAYBACK
WOLF CLAN

"HEAR ME, SORCERERS: YOU CANNOT CAGE THE WOLF."

GROWTH ON THE BATTLEFIELD: NOBLE ARTS DURING COMBAT CAN EARN YOU ZEN POINTS FOR WARRIORS TO IMPROVE THEIR POWERS AND MAGIC.

ZYMETH
LOTUS CLAN

"THE WARLOCKS OF THE FORBIDDEN PATH HAVE CONQUERED DEATH ITSELF,BUT I AM STILL THEIR MASTER."

LIVING RTS REALM: BATTLEFIELDS COME ALIVE WITH WEATHER AND WILD LIFE. COMBAT WILL CHANGE AS THE ELEMENTS SHIFT.

KENJI
DRAGON CLAN

"I AM KENJI, LORD OF THE DRAGON CLAN. MY ANCESTORS BROKE THE WORLD."

UNIQUE CHARACTER: BUILD AN ARMY, ONE WARRIOR AT A TIME. CHOOSE THEM WISELY AND MANAGE EACH UNIT CAREFULLY. THEY ARE THE LIFE-BLOOD OF YOUR CLAN.

Ubi Soft ENTERTAINMENT

LIQUID ENTERTAINMENT

CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT

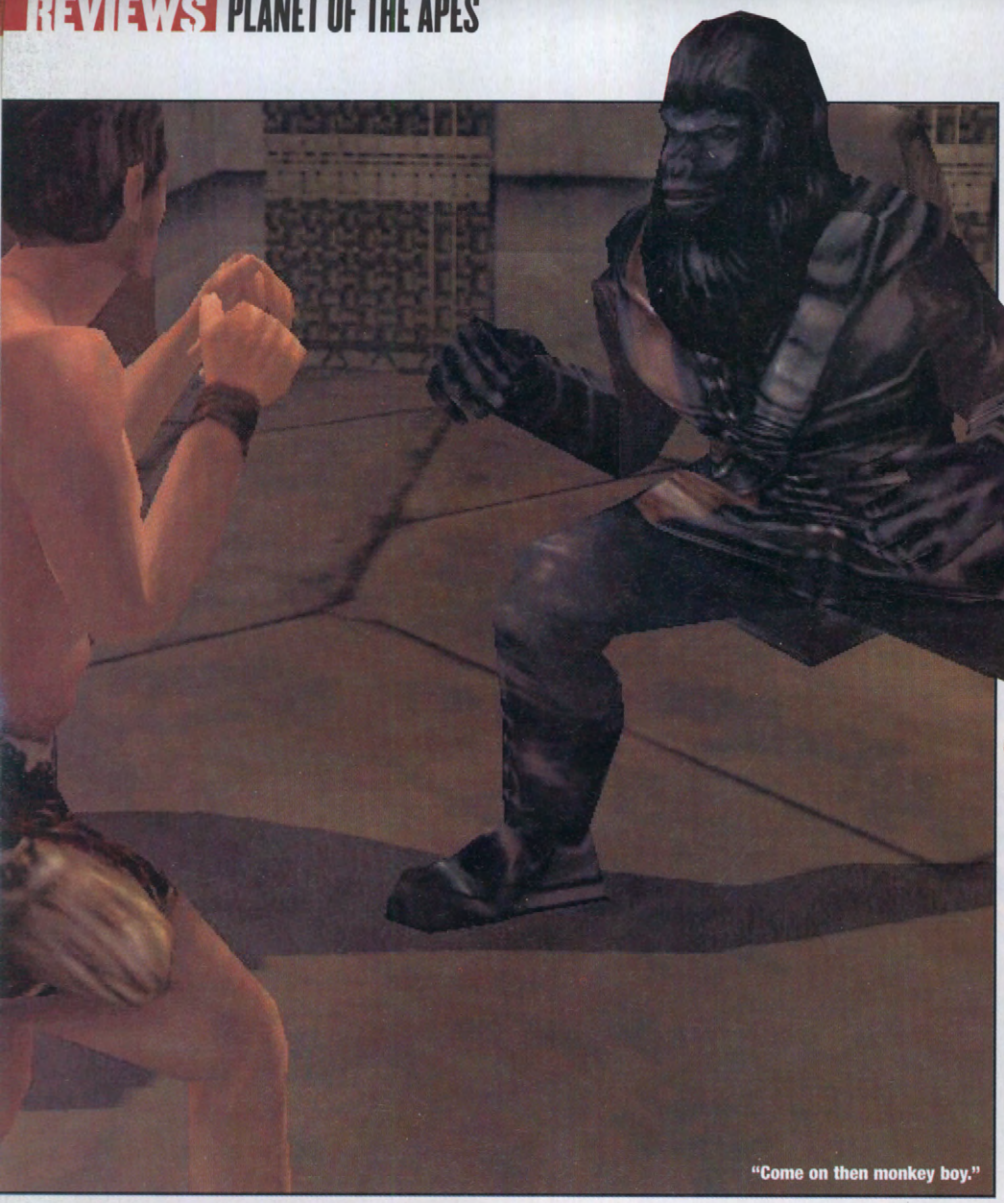
BATTLE REALMS™

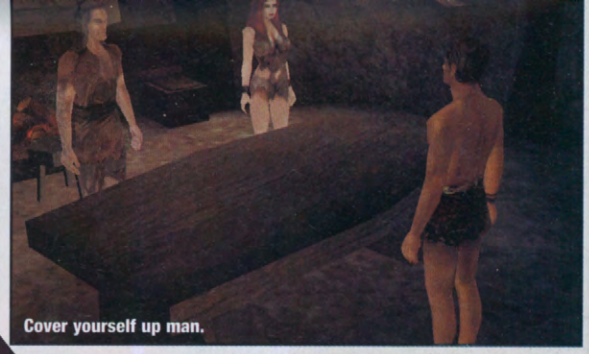
EVERY WARRIOR HAS A NAME

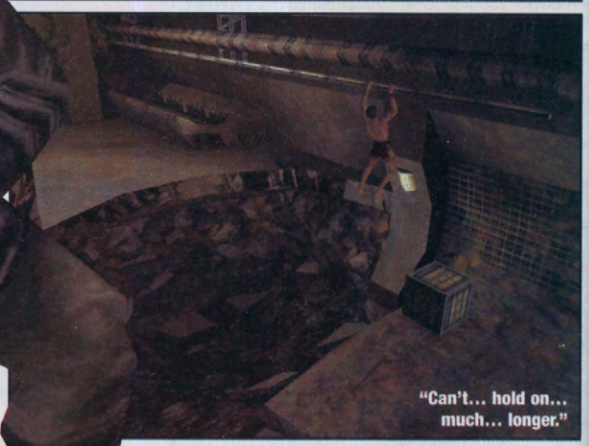
AVAILABLE IN NOVEMBER 2001

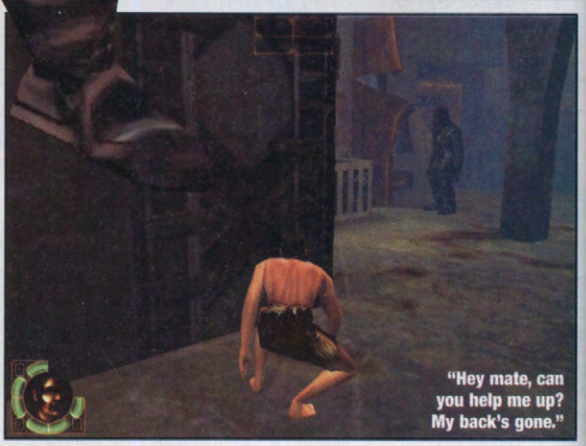
www.battlerealms.co.uk

FKGB • ©2001 Crave Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Battle Engine ©2001 Liquid Entertainment, LLC. All rights reserved. Developed by Liquid Entertainment, LLC. Co-published by Ubi Soft Entertainment S.A. and Crave Entertainment, Inc. under license by Crave Entertainment, Inc. Battle Realms, Crave Entertainment, and the Crave Entertainment logo are either trademarks or registered trademarks of Crave Entertainment, Inc. in the U.S. and other countries. Liquid Entertainment, LLC. and the Liquid Entertainment logo are registered trademarks of Liquid Entertainment, LLC. All other copyrights and trademarks are the property of their respective owners.


"Come on then monkey boy."


Cover yourself up man.


"Can't... hold on... much... longer."


"Hey mate, can you help me up? My back's gone."

PLANET OF THE APES

£19.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

Another great film is desecrated. *Mark Hill* shakes an angry fist at the injustice of it all

IN PERSPECTIVE

For some good old straighforward action/adventure Lara Croft is still your girl, but you should also give *Project Eden* a try for something a bit different. Or you could just go out and eat some bananas.

Planet Of The Apes

Tomb Raider Chronicles

Eating Bananas

The Nomad Soul

Project Eden

We first told you about *Planet of the Apes* way back in issue 79, when there were rumours of an Arnold Schwarzenegger remake to be directed by James Cameron doing the rounds on the Net. More than two years later, it's finally landed on our desks. And, quite frankly, we almost wish it hadn't.

"YOU MANIACS! YOU BLEW IT UP!"

In sharp contrast to Tim Burton's big budget (if misguided) sequel, this game is a *Tomb Raider* clone stripped down to the bare minimum, combining the same sort of lame key-finding puzzles – with an occasional proper brainteaser – and repetitive monkey-bashing. The story is pretty straightforward and takes its cue from the Charlton Heston movie with a spaceship crashing on a planet only to find apes as the ruling species and humans as yahoo-like slaves. Your first job is to get out of a distressingly brown prison dressed like Tarzan, find help and beat up any chimp that stands in your way.

"The combat generally consists of a lacklustre exchange of blows"

Planet Of The Apes was originally being developed for the Dreamcast and PSone as well as the PC, and those roots are all too obvious. In a time when console means PlayStation 2 and Xbox, *Planet Of The Apes* sports some rather primitive graphics, completely devoid of detail. We can live without mouse support, but your character is so unresponsive you really begin to question whether they spent any time at all refining the controls.

NOT MUCH MONKEY MAGIC

You also have to put up with all the usual camera problems these sorts of games had three years ago, and you can only save at the end of a level. It's even more frustrating thanks to the random nature of the combat, which consists of a lacklustre exchange of blows requiring no skill other than knowing what button to press. A monkey could do it.

It's not as though this is the first time the classic original film has been spoiled and messed about with. Countless sequels – each worse than the last – a dreadful TV series and an even worse cartoon have already done that. And let's not forget Burton's latest howler. Like the recent *Evil Dead* game, though, it makes you angry that such a good opportunity has been so wasted. Playing this you'll know how Heston felt when he found the Statue of Liberty sunk in that beach. PCZ

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P300 **Memory** 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 16Mb videocard **WE SAY** Even at the highest resolution with all the textures at their max it looks plain, but runs OK

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS New apes • Vaguely interesting puzzles • Nice price

DOWNERS Awful controls • Poor presentation • Sub-standard dialogue

40 "Damn you all to hell!"

ONLINEZONE

PC GAMING FOR THE MASSES www.pczone.co.uk #9 DEC 2001

MODWATCH SPECIAL

COUNTER-STRUCK:

SPECIAL FORCES MOD ROUND-UP

FRONT LINE FORCE COUNTER-STRIKE URBAN TERROR

INFILTRATION TACTICAL OPS STRIKE FORCE

PLUS FULL MULTIPLAYER REVIEWS OF:

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN MP TEST
OPERATION FLASHPOINT
WARBIRDS III
Y-SOCCERSIM

good fun..." PC Format

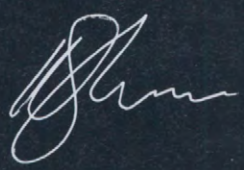
PlayStation.2 CD

MICROIDS
www.microids.com
© 2001 MICROIDS. - All Rights Reserved. © TPL 1999

TOUCHED BY MOD

Without mods gaming life would be dull indeed. Over the last few months we've played a number of commercial action releases, from *No One Lives Forever* to *Serious Sam* and *Red Faction* and each time we've said to ourselves afterwards: yes, these games are OK, but what will the mod community do with them? Where before it was a vain hope, today it is a certainty, that given time and support a mod can eclipse the game on which it is based. Sierra recognised this when they bought into both *Counter-Strike* and *Gunman Chronicles*, and *Quake* creator id has taken a keen interest in third-party add-ons. Without Infiltration, *Unreal Tournament* would have left my hard drive months ago and the same is certainly true of *Counter-Strike* and *Half-Life*. In many cases it is the mod that maketh the game.

Which is why we've decided to concentrate this month on mods, not just any mods, but those that are and continue to be the most popular the world over – team-based real world action add-ons, where two sides sneak around planting bombs or stealing flags, fighting with realistic weapons across recognizable landscapes. And it may surprise you to know that *Counter-Strike*, while still the best example of realistic action, is fast being caught up to by whole bunch of similar mods, the best of which we've taken an in-depth look at. Enjoy.



Richie Shoemaker
Online Editor

CONTENTS

89 COUNTER-STRIKE
Kicking off our Modwatch Special, the one that started it all

90 STRIKE FORCE
Anything *Counter-Strike* can do, *Strike Force* can do.

91 URBAN TERROR
Quake III's answer to the mighty *Counter-Strike*.

92 INFILTRATION
Suitably different to the rest and just as good.

92 FRONT LINE FORCE
If we were to be unkind, we'd call this *Counter-Strike Lite*.

93 TACTICAL OPS
Covering the rear, *Unreal Tournament*'s *CS* wannabe.

94 WOLFENSTEIN MULTIPLAYER TEST
Only one level, but what a level.

95 OPERATION FLASHPOINT
Patched and ready for war.

96 Y-SOCCERSIM
Pants by name, not by nature.

97 WARBIRDS III
Reach for the online skies.

HOW WE SCORE ONLINE GAMES

You'll notice our Online scores are out of five. This is partly to avoid confusion with scores in the main *PC ZONE* reviews section and partly so we don't have to decide between giving a mod 63 or 64 per cent, plus it looks nice. Five stars means great, and one doesn't. It's pretty simple really.

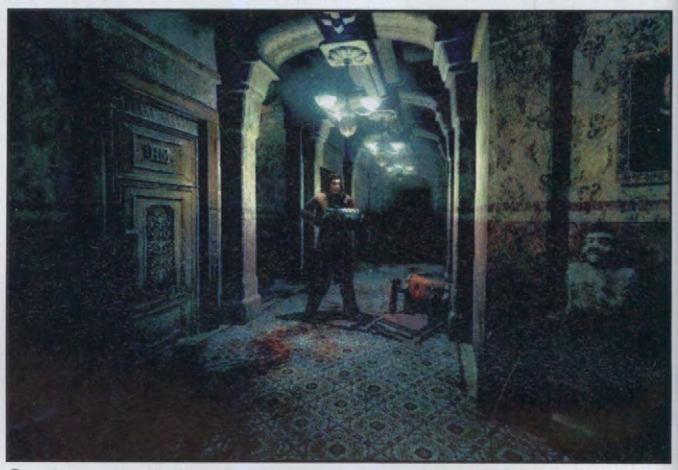
PCZVERDICT

- ★★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★★☆ Very good
- ★★★☆☆ Decent
- ★★☆☆☆ Not bad
- ★☆☆☆☆ Bad

LAN SPEED RECORD

Blueyonder launches ultra fast game service

Blueyonder, the broadband arm of Telewest, has announced its high-speed multiplayer gaming service (MPG), claiming to be the UK's first dedicated service of its kind and said to be comparable in speed to playing on a LAN. Though we couldn't possible comment on such claims, the recently launched subscription-based service is certain to gain a following since the recent demise of NGUK (www.nguk.com) and Wireplay. Thankfully you don't have to be a Blueyonder subscriber to use the MPG service, however, those that are, will have "near-LAN connection speeds". There will of course be various rates of subscription – everyone can play for free on the public severs, but those who get the Gamer subscription (£6.50 inc. VAT) or the Elite subscription (£10.00 inc. VAT) will be able to access more servers, as well as being able to book them immediately or in advance, engage in more clan-related shenanigans, get official rankings and maybe even get a shiny badge. Check out the gaming experience at www.gaming.blueyonder.co.uk.



Complete *Alone In The Dark* in a weekend and it'll only cost a couple of quid.

SOFTWARE TO GO

Extra time for BTopenworld games trial

After announcing plans to stream games through it's broadband Internet service late last year, BTopenworld has decided to extend it's trial of Software To Go, the service started last month where broadband users can play full retail games without having to leave the room.

Currently more than 20 games can be streamed to your PC, from budget titles such as *Mortyr* and *Cue Club* to more recent releases like *The Sims* and *Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare*. *Unreal Tournament* is also available to play in full multiplayer mode, even though no files are installed to your PC whatsoever .

Prices range from 99p for one hours play, to £3.50 for a full week (£7.00 per week for latest releases), though users can opt for 10 minutes of Freeplay and you don't have to be a BTopenworld subscriber to use the service, so long as you have a broadband connection you can try out Software To Go at www.btopenworld.com/softwaretogo.

DRAGON EMPIRES

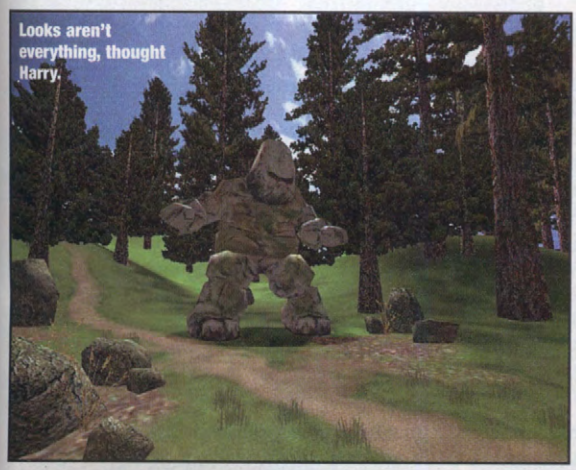
Codemasters breathes some fire into its line-up

There was a time when Codemasters could be relied upon only to release sports titles. Now, after a year that has seen the UK publisher extend it's portfolio to include gory action adventures (*Severance*) and military simulators (*Operation Flashpoint*), it came as no surprise that they had designs on leaping aboard the online RPG haycart. In a bid to out beard the likes of *EverQuest*, and in the wake of Blizzard's announcement of *World Of Warcraft* (see last issue) Codemasters has unveiled *Dragon Empires*.

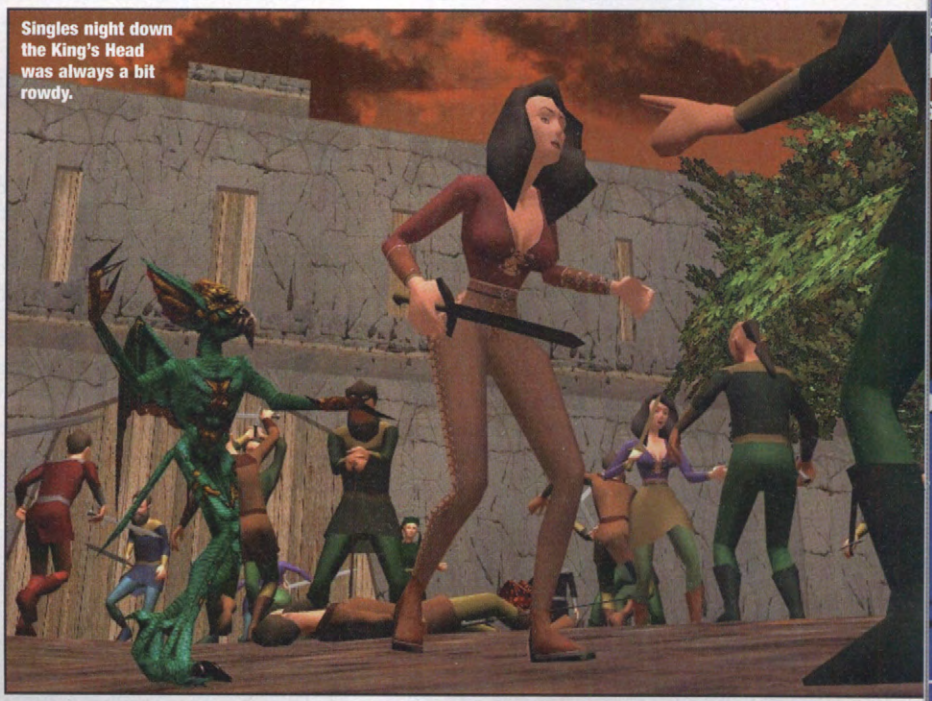
In development at Codies' California studios *Dragon Empires* aims to offer a more action-packed thrill, where players can turn on each other on a whim without having to worry about standing in the right zone or upsetting some career-driven 72nd level cleric who might otherwise be mixing potions. Such actions won't be without a price to one's social standing, but at least you won't have to ask permission before you lop someone's head off.

More than a simple worldwide arena however, *Dragon Empires* promises to offer epic conflicts between and sometimes among whole empires and player-controlled clans. Unlike current online RPGs, player clans can hope to rule entire cities, set taxes, laws and raise armies with the aim to bring more settlements under their control.

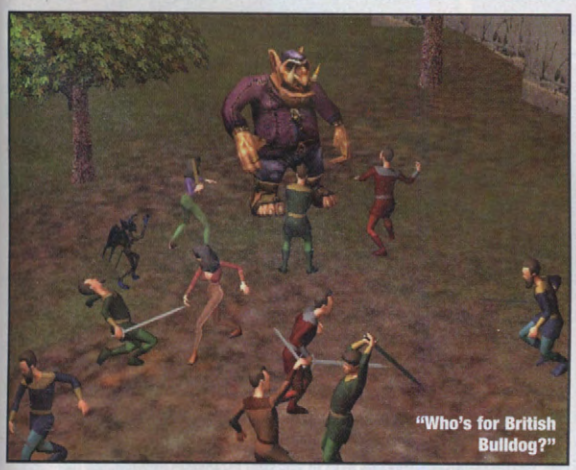
Due for release next summer, *Dragon Empires* looks like it will be going up against stiff opposition, especially as all eyes will be on *Star Wars Galaxies*. Those wishing to keep a eye on what Codemasters has up its little wizard sleeve can go to www.codemasters.com.



Looks aren't everything, thought Harry.



Singles night down the King's Head was always a bit rowdy.



"Who's for British Bulldog?"

He's a horny devil ain't he?

Expect to pay at least $10 a month, although a pricing structure has yet to be confirmed.

good fun..." PC Format
PlayStation.2
CD
MICROIDS
www.microids.com
© 2001 MICROIDS. - All Rights Reserved. © TPL 1999

Co-operation and fair play are key.

The interface is all console simplicity.

It should look even nicer once fully optimised.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

Phantasy phinds a new home. A revolution in console gaming makes its way to PC

For those who are completely unaware of what goes on beyond their bulky beige monitors, Sega's Dreamcast console played host to a game called *Phantasy Star Online* earlier this year. The latest in a long and revered fantasy RPG series, this iteration was something of a departure from the formula, being the world's first true multiplayer online console RPG. And now it's on its way to PC.

This may not seem of much interest to the PC crowd, seeing as we've enjoyed a variety of similar online experiences for many years now. However, the huge success of *PSO* cannot be put down to the novelty of online RPGing for console audiences alone, and the game does in fact offers several key innovations. Foremost among these is an excellent instant translation system, which allows players to communicate in five different languages, including English, Japanese and Spanish. The unique power-up system has also proven extremely addictive, hinging on the nurturing of small creatures called MAGs, which hover at your shoulder and gain in power and abilities as you feed them. A detailed character creation system, real-time squad-based battling and a multiple switch strategy that forces player co-operation is also significant.

On top of all this the game looks extremely lush, and will, of course, look even better on your PC, with enhancements such as bump-mapping and improved draw distance. While resolutely console in style, the game features some brilliantly rendered, if somewhat small, level environments and a variety of pleasingly outlandish creatures. In addition, the more recent *PSO* Version 2, featuring new levels and additional language support, is also on its way to PC early next year.

Whether the PC fraternity will embrace the simple play mechanics of *Phantasy Star Online* waits to be seen, but for the open-minded gamer this could offer a welcome gust of fresh air through the otherwise goblin-infested online RPG arena. Expect a launch around Christmas.

Preview next issue, that's a promise.

The wilderness areas are still being worked on.

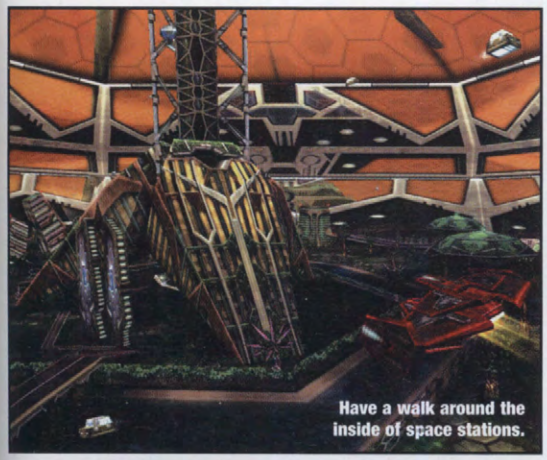
TESTING TIMES FOR NEOCRON

CDV's online RPG is coming on strong

The world of the futuristic *Blade Runner*-inspired RPG *Neocron* is a dark and seedy one. We know because we've been there. We've trodden the shadowy streets of this apocalyptic metropolis, trounced a few things much smaller than us and even found the time to take in a few strip shows. *Neocron*, due for release next year through German publisher CDV is currently in its first beta testing stage and is already looking promising.

Nearly all the structures are in place. The city of Neocron itself as well as areas like Tech Haven, the Outzone and the Wastelands are also being worked on but you can still explore what's there. Since receiving our shiny beta CDs there have been a few moments of jealousy around the *PC ZONE* office over who's got the biggest apartment. This seems to be randomly generated and can range from two rooms up to at least six rooms with two, yes count 'em, dining tables (because even apocalypse survivors need a bit of sophistication).

Areas such as proper monster spawning, terminals for job assignments and a certain amount of detail are being worked on, but we estimate that the game is about 50-60 per cent complete. What more can we say? It's already hugely atmospheric, like stepping into a *Blade Runner* movie only without the noodle stands, but we're sure it's only a matter of time. Look out for our in-depth preview in the next issue and for more information check out www.neocron.com.



Have a walk around the inside of space stations.

Ah, somone's pulled his legs off.

EARTH AND BEYOND

Westwood bound into the unknown

Although we keep carping on about Westwood's first abortive foray into the world of multiplayer gaming (that being *C&C: Sole Survivor*), the Las Vegas-based superdeveloper is keeping itself focused on its first non-RTS title since *Lands Of Lore III*, the ambitious and already impressive *Earth And Beyond Online*.

Set in a distant space-faring future, *E&BO*, despite the whiffy acronym, is a space combat RPG, where players choose one of three warring factions and set about raising, not only their own bank accounts and notoriety, but those of their race or guild. The Terran race are the natural traders, the Progen the game's skilled warriors and the Jenquai rather good at exploring all the nooks and crannies the universe has to offer. Aside from choosing your social group, you can also pick from a number of sub-skills, effectively again, trading, combat or exploration. So as a Progen Warrior you will start out prepared for a promising career of combat, while a Terran Explorer will be both decent at buying and selling paper clips and searching out trade routes that might be off the beaten track. Moreover, each race/skill combination will have its own starting ship. The Terran trader will for example have the ship capable of housing vast quantities of tradable items, while the Jenquai explorer's vessel will be fast, stealthy and lightly armed.

Considering the game is played in the hard vacuum of space, players will be able to customise the look of their actual character, choosing from a number of facial traits, uniforms, body parts and insignia. This area is important, as while you are docked at one of the many dozens of space stations, you will be able to walk around the metallic halls, trade items, join player organisations or just chew the fat. It is this safe, social area that will help elevate the game above the hardcore few thousand and perhaps entice many thousands more – those traditionally adverse to the likes of *EverQuest* or *Anarchy Online*, into the game.

Comprising more than 60 zones, many of which would take hours to explore, *E&BO* will include a number of planets, over which pilots will be able to fly – including the planets of our own solar system. At the moment the game is due to go into its first phase of beta testing, a period scheduled to last until after Christmas. A release date, however, is yet to be set, though we can hopefully expect to be flying through space, courtesy of Westwood, early next summer. Until then, why not stop off at Westwood's site, www.earthandbeyond.com.

Race cars from the 1930s to the 1970s.

24 tracks will be included in the final game.

Can you afford a 428Mb download?

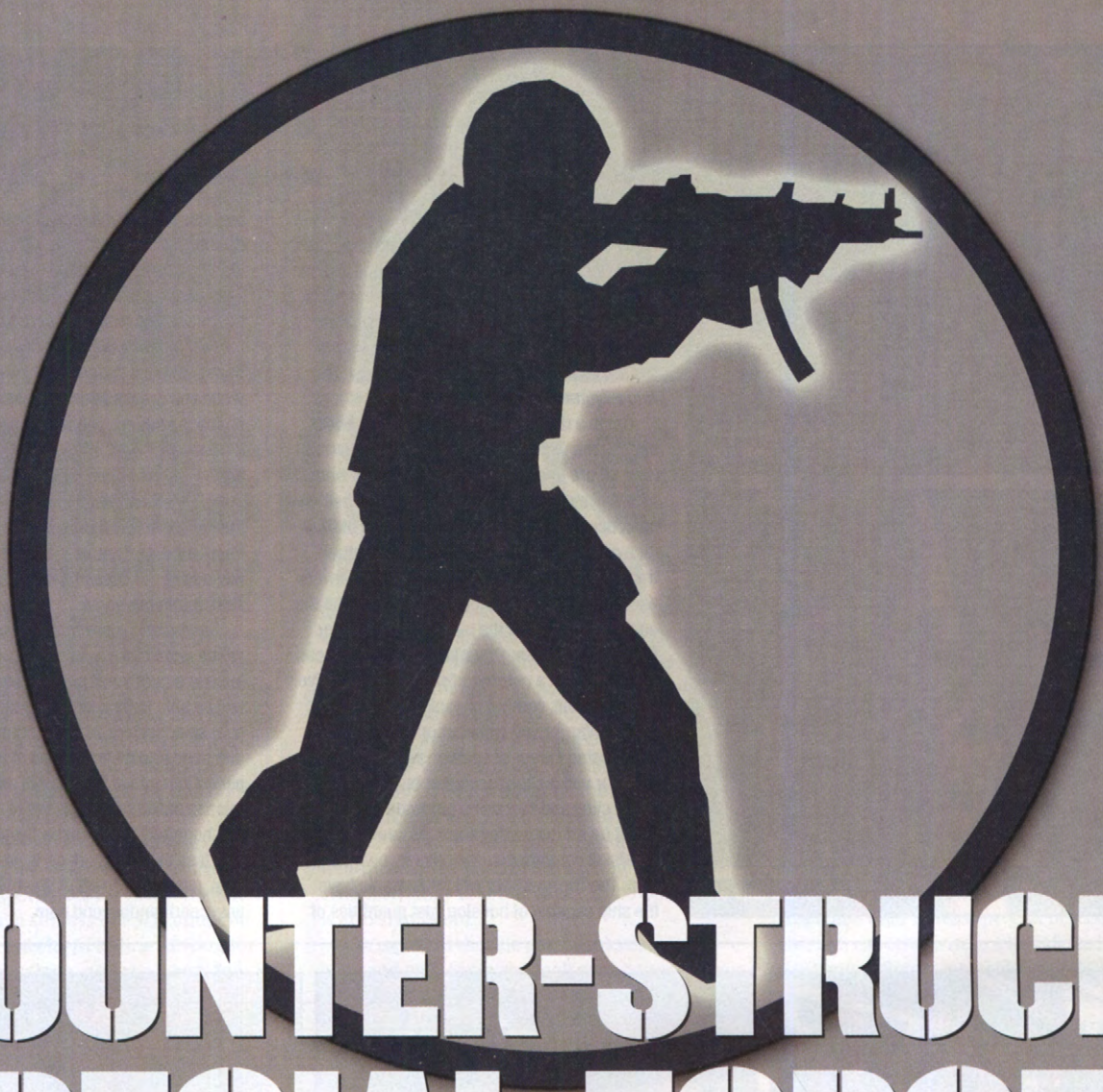
TAKE A DRIVING TEST

Get behind the wheel of *Motor City Online*

Electronic Arts has made *Motor City Online* available for public beta testing, although at 428Mb, the offer may well be beyond the means of most people's online budget. The game, which can be likened to an online cross between *American Graffiti* and *Gran Turismo*, offers players the chance to get behind the wheel of more than 60 licensed American cars, from the 1947 Cadillac Sedanette to more modern beasts from the 1970s. As well as race through streets and off-road across 24 tracks, players can create or join races of their own, some of which will offer virtual cash or space parts. Those with a fondness for axel grease and spanners will, of course, be able to tinker under the bonnet, perhaps build up a huge collection of customised muscle cars, which they can show off to other players, trade or simply auction off. We've yet to fully try out the public beta version, but we'll hopefully have a full report next issue. Until then, get a friend to drop you off at www.motorcityonline.com.

The ladies will be impressed.

good fun..." PC Format
PlayStation.2
CD
MICROIDS
www.microids.com
© 2001 MICROIDS. - All Rights Reserved. © TPL 1999



COUNTER-STRUCK: SPECIAL FORCES MOD ROUND-UP

MODWATCH SPECIAL

***Tony Lamb* smears donkey poo across his forehead, hangs his lucky grenade around his neck and readies his weapon as he spies on the best of the *Counter-Strike*-a-likes**

Ever since id set the gaming world alight by giving away the first episode of classic 3D blaster *Doom* for free, and then making the code available to keen fans, mods have become a staple part of the gaming experience. Other developers have caught onto the act and now the collected add-ons for the likes of *Half-Life*, *Unreal Tournament* and the *Quake* series run into the hundreds. So important are they that any decent shooter now has to be 'moddable' and not including such a feature will likely hamper its long-term popularity. Would *Half-Life* still be in the minds of gamers if *Team Fortress Classic* and *Counter-Strike* hadn't been possible? Would the scariest FPS to date, *Aliens Versus Predator*, have proven a bigger hit if a similar flood of mods had been made?

Mods come in all shapes and sizes, from the ultra-realistic hostage-rescue re-enaction to the weird and wacky mod that turns the game totally on its head. It's the team-based realism mods that are proving the most popular however, and here are some of the cream of the crop. These are the latest versions of some of the biggest, baddest and best-loved real-life mods and total conversions about today, some of which you'll find on our cover CD – look for the On The CD icon. It wouldn't be right if we didn't start with the biggest and best of them all, the mighty *Counter-Strike*. Enjoy…

COUNTER-STRIKE V1.3

BEST FOR HALF-LIFE

Requires full version of *Half-Life*, or retail *Counter-Strike* • www.counter-strike.net

ON THE CD

When the SAS stormed the Iranian embassy in London nearly 20 years ago, counter-terror groups were almost unheard of outside military circles. Few knew who these black-clad soldiers were, but all were chilled by the efficiency with which they carried out their tasks. Overnight, the name of the British SAS became a byword for a military elite, trained to perfection and killing without hesitation when the need arose. Thank God, we said, they're on our side. In our dreams we became those men – weapons ready, bad guys in our sights…

And now we have *Counter-Strike* 1.3 to feed our blood lust. This one-time mere *Half-Life* mod is a gaming phenomenon. With more servers in more countries than any other, and an almost fanatical army of fans (bleary-eyed examples of whom can be found deep in the bowels of *ZONE* towers), *Counter-Strike* has become the model team-based shooter and whatever the mission, this is the mod that sets the standard.

It was around version 7.1 that *CS* went truly interstellar, and then a commercial release with version 1.0. This latest update – 1.3 – hasn't made great strides in terms of visual goodies but concentrates on gameplay, most significantly with the addition of voice-over-Net facilities and Spectator mode. The first of these lets players talk to each other in real time, which is fantastic, but only if the team uses it for the task at hand. Too many people on public servers use it for chit-chat – get on with the game! That said, a team that used this properly would be very hard to beat. Spectator mode is also new, giving fans the chance to step back from the action and watch without getting shot to pieces. Also worthy of particular note is the removal of the bunny-hopping exploit which, while not strictly a cheat, was a means of gaining an unfair advantage over other players. The only people who'll miss it are the cheats – oops, exploiters – themselves.

There are of course other changes too, with a number of tweaks both client- and server-side that should make the game even better for all concerned. The scoreboard has been redesigned and the CapsLock key can be bound too, which is a handy feature for players who have all the other keys near WSAD already taken up. There are some immediate issues with the patch – voice set-up can be fiddly, Spectator mode trips up some voodoo cards, and there is a problem with ATI cards too, but the team are well aware of these and are taking steps to sort them out.

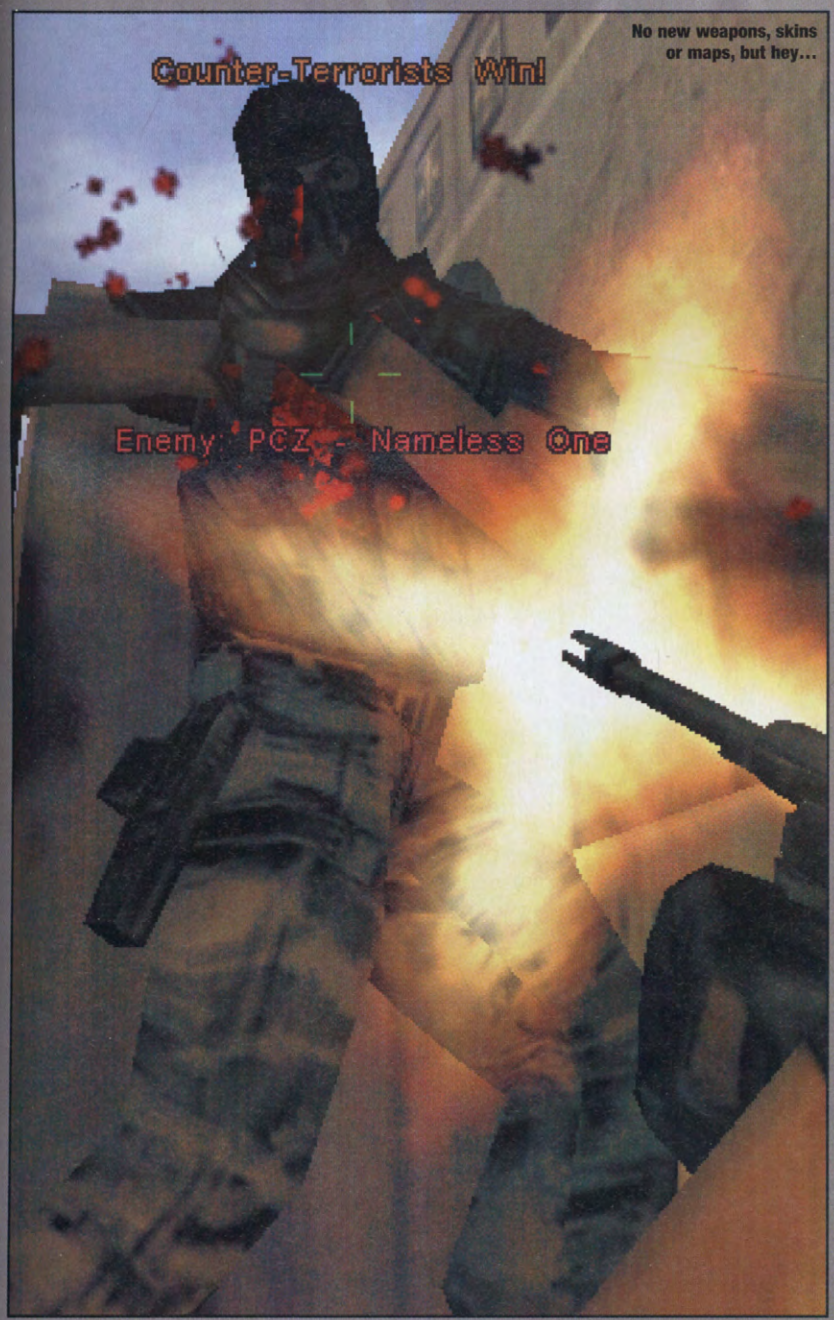
Overall, *Counter-Strike* is still the daddy. That is, it is in *Half-Life* terms anyway. With *UT*'s *Strike Force* out there and easily winning a 5/5 score too, it's a close fight.

PCZVERDICT

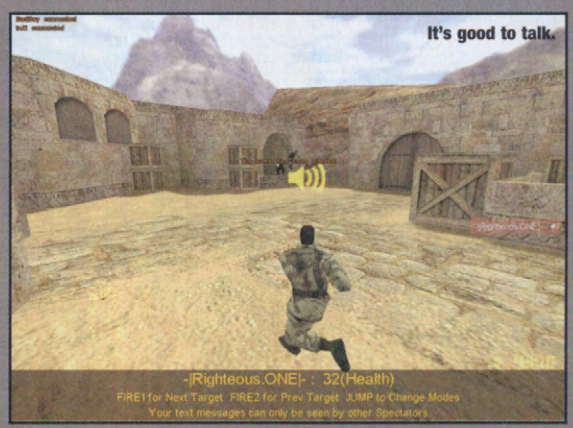
UPPERS *Half-Life*'s best just gets better • Voice-over-Net • Spectator mode • No more bunny-hopping

DOWNERS *Strike Force* graphics rule • Improper use of the voice feature

★★★★★



No new weapons, skins or maps, but hey…



It's good to talk.

Spectator Mode – almost worth dying for.

good fun..." PC Format
PlayStation.2 CD
MICROIDS
www.microids.com
© 2001 MICROIDS. - All Rights Reserved. © TPL 1999

STRIKE FORCE V1.6

BEST FOR UNREAL TOURNAMENT

Requires full version of *Unreal Tournament* • www.strikeforcecenter.com

Not many weapons to choose from, but they look fantastic.

Looks good, eh?

At 250Mb, *Strike Force* is a mod in a different class. It's a total conversion and it's huge, but you can rest assured that every one of those 250 chunky megs is stuffed full with gaming fun. In fact (and it will be seen as heresy in some circles to say this) you might well think that *SF1.6* is now even better than its *Counter-Strike* inspiration, although *CS* has probably regained the lead through the addition of voice-over-Net commands in the latest patch… but only just.

To see just how thorough *Strike Force* is, take a look at its website. The online manual is big, detailed, easy to read and full of helpful tips and tricks on how to enjoy the game either online or against bots – the latter being an area in which *UT* scores bigtime over its competitor. In fact, you'd do well to read this manual anyway because *SF1.6* has so much to learn.

Having installed *Strike Force*, and made yourself a cup of tea while waiting for its 250Mb to unravel onto your hard drive, you'll find a shortcut *SF* starter on your desktop. You have to use this to start the game – it can't be done within *UT* – and it was a relief to see that after an abortive earlier attempt this feature is now back and functioning the way it was always meant to.

Start the game and try out the training rooms. Neat eh? Just another aspect of this amazing mod. Now decide whether to play online or against your PC. Bots work extremely well in *SF* – better than many humans – and will give you a good workout any day. The maps are all first class, a great mix of close-quarter building-clearance blast fests alongside a couple of more open-air outside environments. They're still a little dark on average, but are so damned good that it would be almost rude to complain. The *UT* graphics engine is really strutting its stuff in *Strike Force*, with great use of textures and object placement.

SF is packed with other features too. A heartbeat monitor shows the level of stress you are putting on your body – run, jump or carry too much and you'll slow down. Get hit and an outline icon will show you where. A running tally shows how many members of each team are left. Tap the forward key twice and you'll sprint. Click mouse button two to lift your weapon into aiming mode and watch for the red-dot aiming point to appear. Impressive stuff.

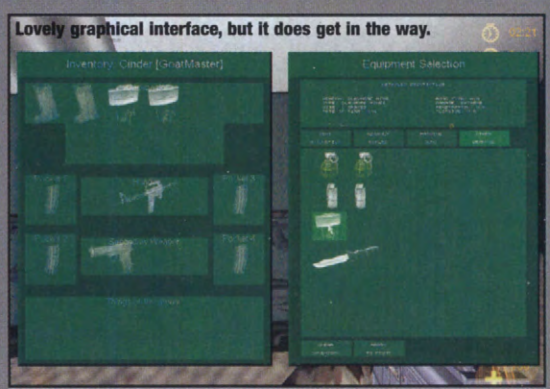
My only gripe is the limited weapons choice, which hasn't improved over earlier versions. More variety would be nice. Still, that's the only problem – everything else about *Strike Force* rocks.

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Looks amazing • Outstanding maps and detail • Good use of bots • Many third-party maps

DOWNERS Huge file size • Limited range of equipment

★★★★★

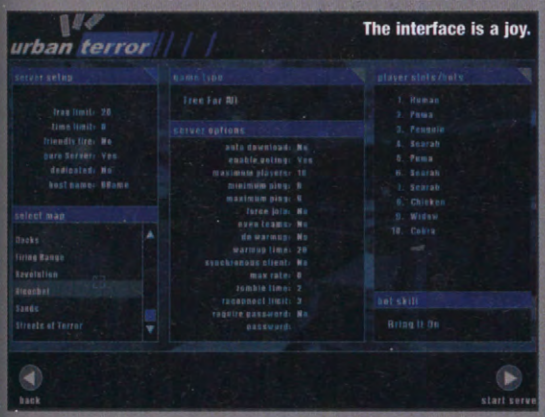


Lovely graphical interface, but it does get in the way.

URBAN TERROR BETA V2.3

BEST FOR QUAKE III ARENA

Requires fully patched version of *Quake III Arena* • www.urbanterror.net



The interface is a joy.

ON THE CD

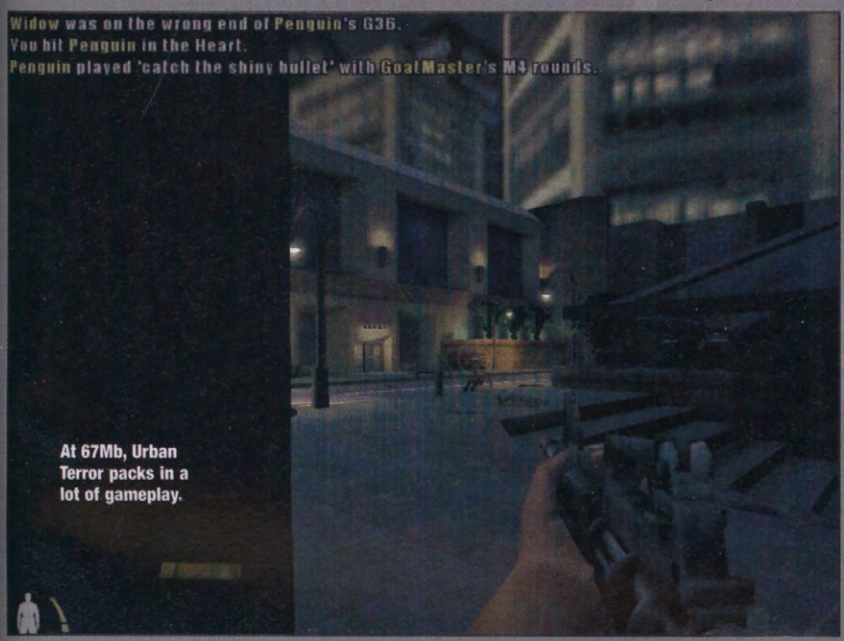
Realism mods are thinner on the ground for *Quake III* than other games, and it might be because the *Quake III* engine adds a 1950s technicolor movie tinge to everything on screen. This makes it inherently more suited to fragging aliens than capping a few hoods in downtown LA, but thank goodness for *Urban Terror* because it does a very good job of recreating a *Counter-Strike*-style environment with the *Quake III* tools at hand. It's recognisably Quakey in origin, but the Silicon Ice team have really got their thinking caps on and put together a very enjoyable terrorist/counter-terrorist total conversion, with more gameplay options than the *Half-Life* original to keep players happy.

A lot of attention and effort has gone into *Urban Terror*, and it's good to see that despite all the work, the mod has managed to keep down to a reasonable 67Mb, which is just about acceptable for a 56K dial-up – albeit a very long one. This 67Mb is feature-packed too, with gameplay types including Free-For-All, Team Deathmatch, Team Survivor (like Last Man Standing, but for the whole team), Capture and Hold (Domination) and good old-fashioned Capture The Flag. The game is easy to learn and its in-game interface (accessed by pressing Escape) allows you to change system or game settings, add bots or change your weapons selection whenever you want – a neat feature. At the start of each battle you choose your weapons loadout from the now 'standard' selection of pistols, SMGs, rifles and grenades, squeeze into your favourite body armour, select a map and get stuck into the game of your choice.

Once in a game, you'll notice a host of features that will make your life easier. As well as icons to tell you your score, ammunition remaining and the amount of time left in each round, a body outline and bar in the bottom left corner will tell you your current stamina and give you an idea of where you have been wounded (if at all). A neat feature in *Urban Terror* is the ability to apply a bandage to prevent yourself from bleeding to death. Don't forget it.

The maps are good, even if their colour tint does grate a little. This might detract slightly from the realism of the game, but the gameplay really is good enough to make it easily ignored. Bots work extremely well on all of the maps and while character animations and close-up skin detail aren't up to *Unreal Tournament* standards, they're neat nonetheless. And besides, if you get close enough to one of the bots to notice his complexion then you're probably about to die anyway.

Urban Terror doesn't quite have the atmosphere of *Counter-Strike*, or the graphical juice of *Strike Force*, but for *Quake III* fans it's a must.



At 67Mb, Urban Terror packs in a lot of gameplay.

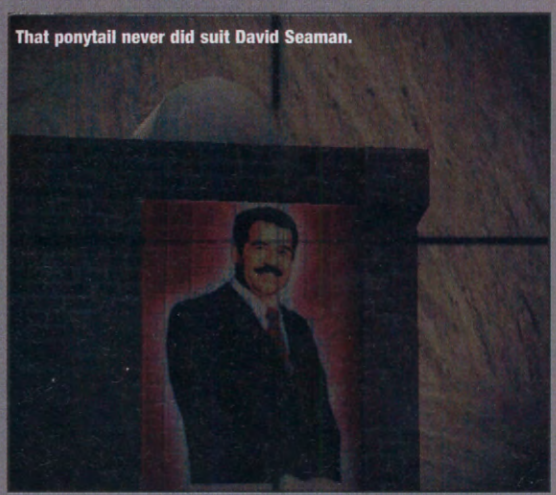
The colourful graphics suit the action-oriented gameplay.

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Great fun • Gameplay variety • More maps available • Easily learnt

DOWNERS Not the best graphics • More blast 'em up than the rest

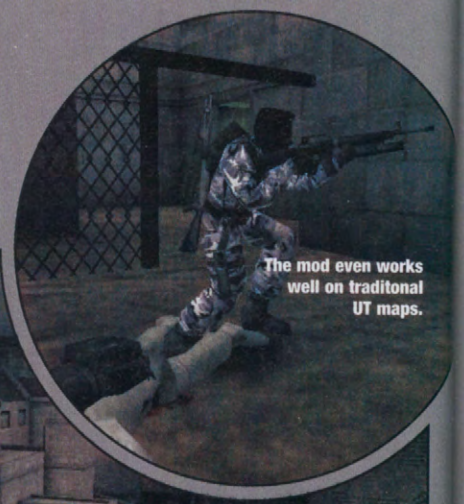
★★★★★


That ponytail never did suit David Seaman.

good fun..." PC Format
PlayStation.2
CD
MICROIDS
www.microids.com
© 2001 MICROIDS. - All Rights Reserved. © TPL 1999

INFILTRATION V2.86

Requires full version of *Unreal Tournament* • www.planetunreal.com/infiltration



ON THE CD

Infiltration is one of the most realistic mods yet. It's a team-based shooter with real-world weapons, but has its players as part of a squad of soldiers who might have any one of a range of objectives – Seek and Destroy, Assassination or Target Capture for example. Missions are limited only by the imagination of the scenario's creators.

Everything is designed to be ultra-realistic, from the lack of crosshairs (you use iron sights, or maybe a scope if you're lucky) to muzzle recoil. Learn to take this into account, and 'walk' your rounds into an enemy if required. Shooting in *Infiltration* isn't easy, but it can be learnt – and it's horribly effective when perfected.

Slavish attention to detail extends to the rest of the mod too. You'll choose your team and weapons limited only by the weight you can carry – cash isn't an issue. Make sure you carry enough ammo as field replenishment is unlikely. Weapons are the now *de rigeur* selection of Beretta, Desert Eagle, MP5, P90 and a smattering of grenades and other goodies. In this mod more than any other you'll need to learn how to use your choice of firearms to their best effect. Instant expertise won't happen here.

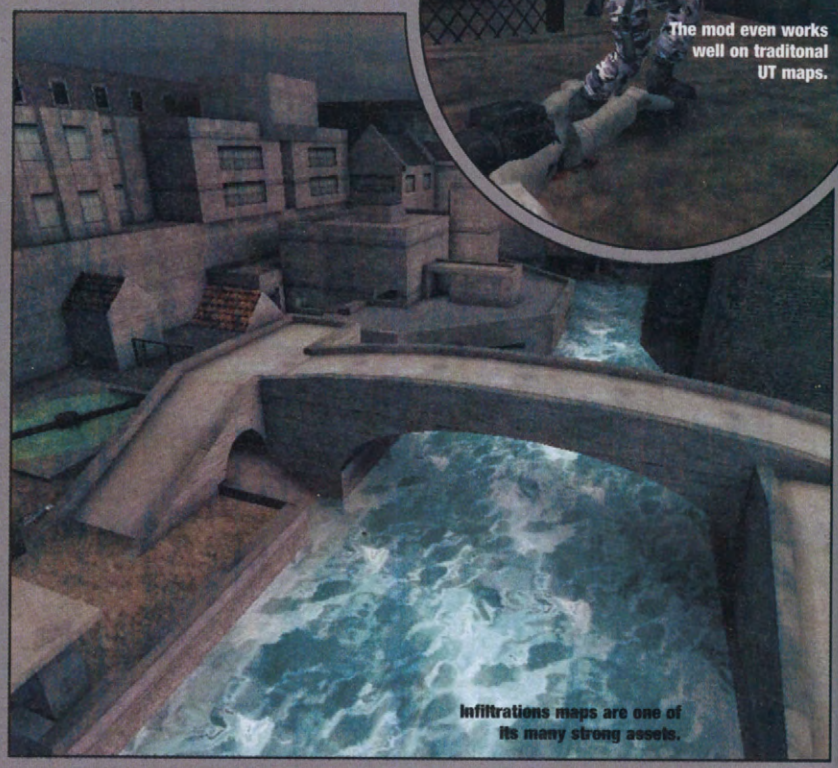
Graphics are topnotch and all to the same high standard. If a great game with ultra-realism appeals to you, then you should try this one for size.

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Looks great • Ultra-realistic • Fab maps

DOWNERS Bit of a steep learning curve

★★★★★



FRONT LINE FORCE V1.3A

Requires full version of *Half-Life* • www.flfmod.com

As a mod, *Front Line Force* is something of a hybrid, with the team gameplay of *Counter-Strike* and class elements of *Team Fortress* intertwined. Two teams fight to the death to capture a sequence of points, and in joining a team you decide whether to be a light, medium or heavy class soldier (here called Recon, Assault and Support) – each with a particular set of weapons. There's no scrabbling around for cash to buy things, so the armour versus firepower question is answered for you. The weapons pool is standard, but the Recon class will also find a sniper rifle with variable zoom and the Support class can grab a heavy machine gun of awesome firepower but dubious accuracy. As an all-rounder, Assault is the one to choose…

FLF maps are among the best, with great layouts that lead to fast-paced action and the need for some real tactical thinking. No single 'class' has any advantage, and death doesn't result in disqualification from the rest of the game. Player and weapon skins are top class (although obviously limited), weapons lovingly drawn, sounds spot on and map textures deftly employed. It's not quite as involved or atmospheric as *Counter-Strike*, but it's more user-friendly and the difference is really just a matter of personal taste.

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Familiar • Looks and plays well • Brief respawn delay

DOWNERS Less atmosphere than *Counter-Strike* • Not quite as detailed • No bots

★★★★★

TACTICAL OPS BETA 2

Requires full version of *Unreal Tournament* • www.tactical-ops.net

Tactical Ops and *Strike Force* have stood shoulder to shoulder for some time, each making great use of the outstanding graphics and bot support that *UT* offers. However, *Tactical Ops* has now taken a more action-packed route, eschewing the ultra-realistic style to offer more in the way of adrenaline-pumping fun.

The story is familiar – Special Forces versus Terrorists – and the range of weapons is similar too, reading like a shopping list at a SWAT arms convention (Desert Eagle, Beretta, Mossberg, H&K MP5, AK47, Steyr and PSG-1) they're all here. This makes for a very familiar feel to the mod and it's refreshingly easy to get into, as well as being very easy to set up and practice.

Tactical Ops has scenarios involving hostage rescue or bomb planting/defusal, but designers have the flexibility to create other storylines too – should they so desire. This is a semi-realistic mod, and that gives leeway in the plot as well as meaning that players can run and jump without getting tired or breaking limbs. If you die you have to wait out the round, but this isn't a problem if you're fighting bots.

Tactical Ops is packed with great maps, skins and sounds… and is good fun into the bargain. Top class.

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Better weapons than *Strike Force* • Flexible scenarios • It's got bots

DOWNERS Death lasts whole round • Fewer maps • It's not as realistic

★★★★★

BRINGING UP THE REAR

You've read about six of the best, now here are the rest

TRUE COMBAT

Another great-looking *Q3* real-world mod going by the name of *True Combat* (www.truecombat.com). Beta 0.45, which is available now, comes only with Standard Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch and Survivor modes.

FIREARMS

Firearms (www.firearmsmod.com) has been one of our favourites for some time. Available for *Half-Life*, the mod allows players to parachute into some maps and includes a reinforcements system since taken up by the likes of *Wolfenstein*.

DAY OF DEFEAT

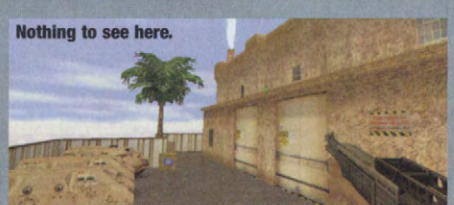
Version 1.3b is the current version of this highly popular *Axis & Allies* mod, which recently added *CS*-style mission objectives. If you've been playing the *Wolfenstein* multiplayer test, you really should give this a whirl.

ANNIHILATION

Another WWII class-based mod, *Annihilation* (www.planetquake.com/annihilation) lacks the polish of *Day Of Defeat*. A *Quake III* total conversion, it's looking nice graphically and in time we hope it will eclipse *DOD*.

GLOBAL WARFARE

Currently offering just desert maps, with Arabs taking on UN troops, *Global Warfare* (www.planethalflife.com/globalwarfare) loses out on many levels to *Counter-Strike*. Beta 1.0 is out now if you have a copy of *Half-Life*.



FULL METAL JACKET

Set during the Vietnam War, *Full Metal Jacket* for *Q3* features *CS*-style class-based action pitting US Marines against the Viet Cong. We haven't tried it, although the first public beta should be available as you read this from www.planetquake.com/fmj.

good fun..." *PC Format*
PlayStation.2
CD
MICROIDS
www.microids.com
© 2001 MICROIDS. - All Rights Reserved. © TPL 1999

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

MULTIPLAYER TEST

Out now • Gray Matter/Activision • www.activision.com/games/wolfenstein

***Richie Shoemaker*, reviewing a demo? Surely not**

Here's one you might like to note down for future reference: the difference between a test and a demo. In real terms there's very little of course, though it means we normally aren't allowed to put tests on coverdiscs, since, officially, they aren't demos.

TESTING, TESTING

In *Wolfy*'s case, we're told this download isn't a true reflection of how the final game will play online, just a test to aid the developers towards tweaking of the final game. What this means is after rigorous examination across the world, *Wolfenstein*'s multiplayer game will storm the castle rather than flounder on the beach. We know, because this test is fantastic.

If you have a high-speed Internet connection the download is well worth it. Though a hefty 64Mb in size and offering just one Normandy-style map, it has for a few days gripped not only the *PC ZONE* office, but those of sister magazines, technical support and even the underworked and overpaid *PC ZONE* website hobgoblins that have their own microwave and work on the airy fifth floor. There are names playing on our lunchtime LAN server we haven't seen since *Counter-Strike* was struck off in May this year – it's that good.

A MATTER OF CLASS

A cross between *Team Fortress* and *Unreal Tournament*'s Assault mode, the *Wolf* test only offers one style of game, where the Allies must storm the beach, breach the castle wall, steal the plans and find the German radio room – all of which the Hun must put a stop to before time runs out. To make things interesting the game also offers class-based play. Lieutenants can call in air strikes, Medics can resurrect and heal and Engineers are the ones that can plant or diffuse explosives. The final class, the Soldier, is pretty standard, only with a far greater range of weapons to choose from than the other class's trio of sub-machine guns – with a panzerfaust, chaingun, sniper rifle or flame-thrower to add to the arsenal. And what a fine set of weapons they are – all perfectly balanced. The flame-thrower, apart from being the most graphically impressive, is also the most convincing since *Kingpin* – the makers of which are the creators of this fine game.

On the downside, the scoring system needs work, as does the respawning, which can see you sitting out a game for a lengthy period if you happen to die at the wrong moment. Similarly, more work needs to be done of a couple of the classes, but as a test, if you have the speed, download it now. You'd do well to get some practice in, because based on the evidence, *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* is likely to be the biggest FPS online since *Counter-Strike*. PM

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Great weapons • Tense gameplay

DOWNERS Only one map • Too much waiting around when you die

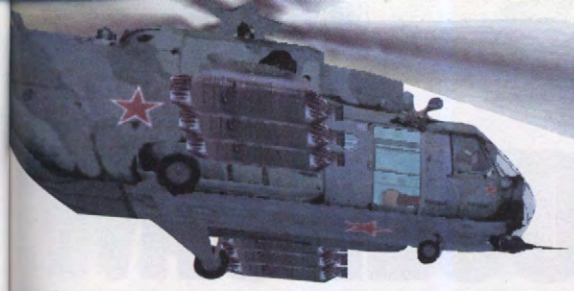
★★★★★

This bodes very well indeed

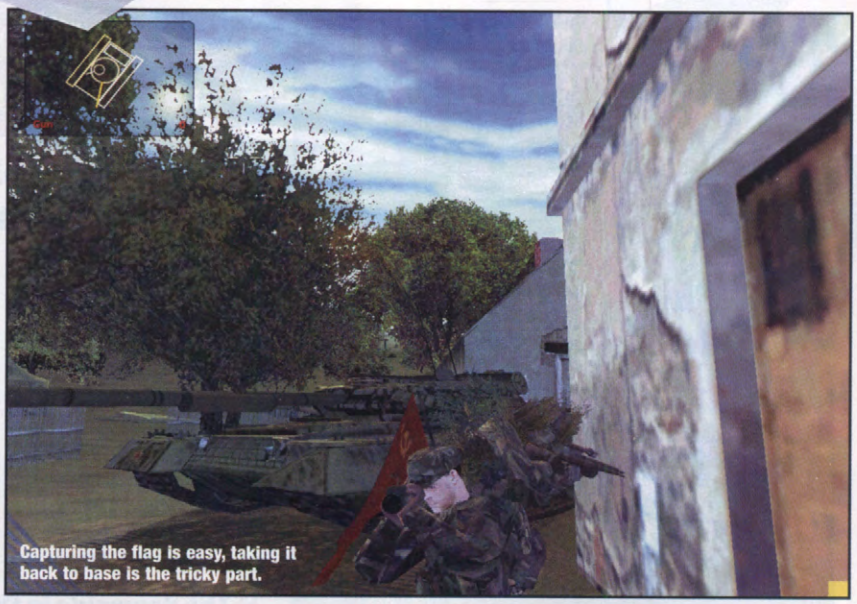
The flame effects are downright lovely.

Teamwork is everything as the allies hit the trenches.

Call in airstrikes and watch the flames rise.

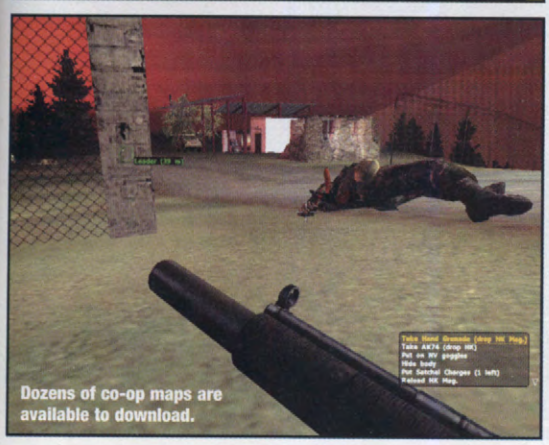


We could have taken a jeep each, but we all stuck together. Ah.


Capturing the flag is easy, taking it back to base is the tricky part.

Deathmatch games are painless.

So-called team mates don't hang about.


Dozens of co-op maps are available to download.

OPERATION FLASHPOINT V1.2

★ £29.99 • Codemasters • Out now • www.codemasters.com/flashpoint

***Richie Shoemaker* fancies a change of pace**

Thanks to the US release of *Operation Flashpoint* and the subsequent patch for us, *Flashpoint*'s online game now works. Whereas before we would've been dumped out of deathmatch or detained indefinitely before capturing a flag, crashes and connection problems are now largely gone. The only problem we're left with is lag.

Even so, trying to get a game started is a little archaic. Those that opt to use Gamespy Arcade (www.gamespy.com) can trade connection speeds for ease of use, otherwise it's a case of swapping IP addresses, a form of online handshaking as old as the Internet itself.

A MATTER OF CLASS

Deathmatching aside, *Flashpoint*'s multiplayer game is quite good, although it requires a more radical and considered playing style than other pretend war games such as *Delta Force* or *CS*. Here you can lay behind a tree for 10 minutes and not see a soul, then pop your head from behind a leaf and wind up inviting a party of bullets over for doughnuts and coffee. Also, you'll often end up going the wrong way, miles from where the action is, or indeed find out after respawning that the fight is a couple of miles up the road and there are no jeeps left in your base to get you there.

"You'll often end up going the wrong way, miles from where the action is"

SIZE COUNTS

So big are the maps and so few are the players *OpFlash* will be an exercise in tedium and frustration for many. Unless you get in with a good crowd, teamwork is far from evident. On one CTF map I played everyone jumped in the nearest vehicle, went off, died, then took the next vehicle. When the vehicles ran out they lost interest.

Where it shines is as a co-operative game. Here the veteran players are happy to take the lead and everyone else is keen to follow, and there is far greater sense of teamwork, especially as goals are more focused. It's better suited to the handful of players required for co-operative missions. I might even say *Flashpoint*'s co-op game is as good, if not better, than the single-player game. I certainly learnt a few things by watching and listening to my team-mates, skills I've since used in the single-player game.

When it comes to teamwork and realism, *Flashpoint* is as close as it gets. As in reality, however, it helps to know who you're working with and against. Intelligence is key and unless you've played the single-player game to its conclusion, I wouldn't consider going online. PM

PCZVERDICT

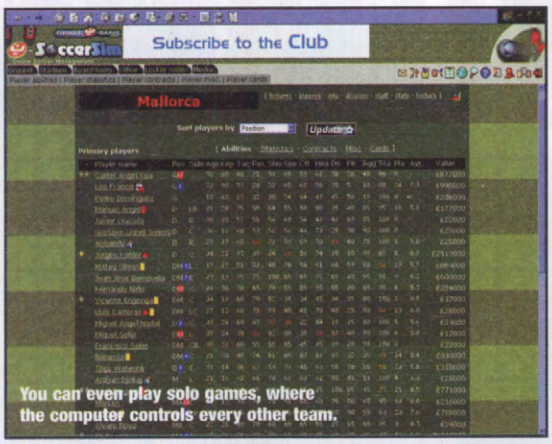
UPPERS Superb co-op game • Wide open maps and vehicles • Intelligent and considered approach

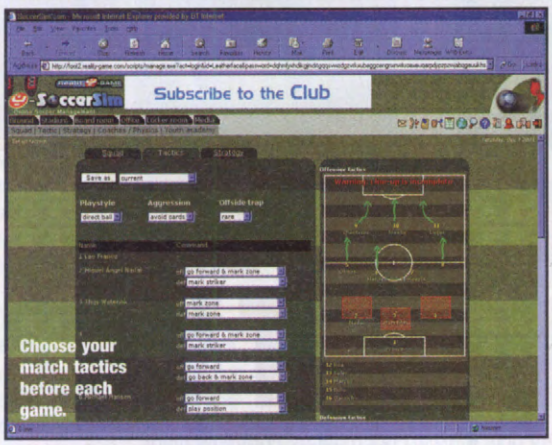
DOWNERS Too few players per map • High-speed connection essential • Unwieldy connection/set up

★★★★★

***Counter-Strike* pour homme**

good fun..." *PC Format*
PlayStation.2 CD
MICROIDS
www.microids.com
© 2001 MICROIDS. - All Rights Reserved. © TPL 1999





Y-SOCCERSIM

★ Around £3 a month • Reality-Game • Out now • www.reality-game-com

***Mark Hill* votes for the footie sim's entry into Europe**

After a year of beta testing, the *ZONE* office's most played online football management sim is ready. It's not as impressive as the upcoming *Sky Sports* game and is likely to be obliterated by *CM4* next year, but *Soccersim* has a charm all of its own.

It looks like a Commodore 64 game and has a stupid name, but *Y-Soccersim* does offer a whole European continent to play in, with hundreds of teams to choose from and a wealth of tactical options at your disposal. And, because the game is truly European – it was developed by Swedes and is being published by a French company – you'll come across an international selection of adversaries. You're just as likely to meet with German, Greek or Spanish managers as English ones, without having to worry about language barriers.

BROWSING AROUND

This being a browser-based game, there are no downloads whatsoever. But because it only gets updated at certain times of the day you don't feel that you're missing out on anything when you're not there.

"The downside is that matches are reduced to a score and a load of text"

There are several universes running at any one time and you can hop into the one you like best (of course, the newer the game the more chances you have of managing the team you want). Different games are updated with varying frequency, so you can also choose your level of involvement. You can also choose between games with real players or fictionalised names, although we're not quite sure yet which is the least realistic proposition. You see, unless you manage a massive club like Man United or Real Madrid, full of well-known stars, the names of your players and their actual stats have little relation to the real world. There doesn't seem much point in having a real squad at your disposal if you're going to have to choose players you've never heard of because they happen to be better than the established team.

The real excitement comes in the anticipation: will you get selected over other applicants for the job you really want? Will the star midfielder you've just put an offer in on choose your club above others? Will that new formation bring you FA Cup glory? The biggest downside is that matches are reduced to a score and a load of text, and you never feel you have enough control (especially when you're used to making tactical changes on the fly in *Champ Man*). *Y-Soccersim* is still a lot of fun, and though it won't take up much of your time, you'll go back to it again and again. PCZ

PCZVERDICT

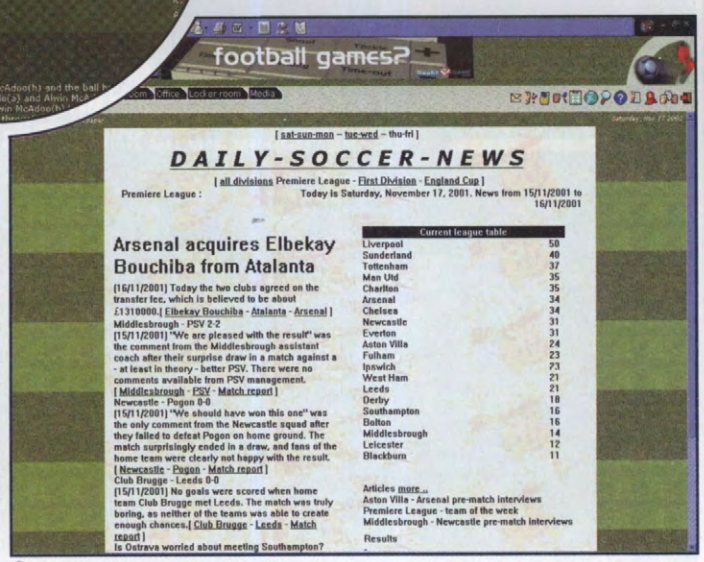
UPPERS Cheap • No downloads • Hundreds of other managers • Tactical depth

DOWNERS Dull to look at • Rubbish stats for real players • No real control over matches

★★★★★

The perfect game to tide you over until *CM4* arrives

How much you get out of it will depend largely on how much you're willing to put in.



Newspapers add a nice touch.

WARBIRDS III

US$9.95 • Out now • www.warbirdsiii.com

***Daniel Emery* once again finds his head stuck high up in the clouds**

Customisable skins mean you can make the planes as accurate as you like.

Aces High. IL-2 Sturmovik. Flight Sim 2002. For a genre that was virtually dead in the water last year, 2001 has seen a virtual U-turn in its fortune. The flight sim is back, and it's back with a vengeance. So the latest sim to take to the sky is *WarBirds III*. And whereas *WarBirds II* was a seamless transition from original *WarBirds*, the third instalment has had not so much a facelift, as full-frontal plastic surgery.

The first thing that really makes you sit up and beg are the graphics. While it's still not quite up to *IL-2 Sturmovik* standards yet, it's very close. *Sturvomik* is slated for release in November, but *WBIII* is in continual development, which means continual improvements and downloads.

FLYING HIGH

The upgrade from the 2.x incarnation has been a bit of a double-edged sword. On the one hand the full 3D cockpits, tracer smoke and a host of other features are a huge step forward. However, while the old game had more than 50 different aircraft, *WarBirds III* has less than half that number. But the key word here is 'for now'. The old version reached a glass ceiling. The game engine had a maximum number of aircraft that could be added. Want some more? Tough luck. *WarBirds III* has no such limitations. The only thing holding back the addition of new aircraft is design and development. Which sadly, does take a while.

The other facet of *WarBirds III* that separates it from *IL2* is the style of gameplay. *IL2* is first and foremost an offline single-player game. Sure, you can get up to 32 players on a LAN or small server, but that's your lot. *WarBirds III* though, is an online thoroughbred. While it has some offline content, it's just a sandpit play area to learn the basics. If you want to play in the big leagues, you need to get yourself into the online arenas. While this can be quite daunting for new players, *WarBirds* has a dedicated staff (trainers) who'll get you over the steep learning curve – a nice little feature.

"It's had not so much a facelift, as full-frontal plastic surgery"

But great graphics don't mean a great game. There are two types of play at present. The 'furball' arena, which is basically a non-stop fragfest of epic proportions (think *Quake* with wings). Alternatively, there are organised events that recreate classic battles of WWII (the Battle of Britain, Midway, Pearl Harbor and so on).

MISSING IN ACTION

While these are definitely one of the most fun aspects of the game, the lack of plane types does make for the occasional fudge or two. Cue the old gripe about lack of planes. The other complaint is the lack of strategy in the game. At present it's 'shoot down a plane, wash, repeat' until you're blue in the face. And even though there are land targets to take your B17 or B24 (notice the lack of British planes here), its still using the tired old formula from 2.x days. While the developers are promising great things in the future, they're playing their cards close to their chest. In the words of developer Dan Neault: "Give it a little more time – the systems should be public soon. Until we show the whole deal I cannot even begin to talk about how much that's going to affect *WarBirds III*, because people won't fully appreciate what it has to offer." Watch this space.

WarBirds III has great potential and it's cheap to play and loads of fun. You can even get the software off last month's cover disc. What more do you want? Smart. PCZ

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Low cost • Gobsmacking graphics • Improves over time

DOWNERS *Quake* with wings • Lots of missing planes

★★★★★

The best online flight sim to date

Contrary to popular belief, this isn't a swastika. It was the Finnish national markings from 1919-1944.

Having a very bad day...

"Mummy I'm scared!"

good fun..." PC Format
PlayStation.2 CD
MICROIDS
www.microids.com
© 2001 MICROIDS. - All Rights Reserved. © TPL 1999

READERS' FREE-FOR-ALL

After a month's break the Readers' Free-For-all is back, *Martin Korda* throws down the challenge...

The Free-For-All events of the last two months have, as always been hugely successful, so much so that we've decided to run two *Counter-Strike* servers each month to cater for the huge demand. And as promised in our October issue, we've listed the names of the star players from our August and September Free-For-Alls.

Since our last Readers' Challenge, we also managed to finally find a worthy opponent, Clan H4Wk, to take us on at a four on four match of *Quake III: Arena*, although they did in fact turn out to be somewhat unworthy as they put up about as much of a fight as a one armed pacifist, going down to an embarrassing 5-0 defeat. However, an average Ping of more than 250 probably didn't help their cause too much on a game as fast as *Quake III*. Many thanks to Clan H4Wk for such a good-natured game, and we await the next challenge. Over the next few months we'll be accepting challenges for *Quake III* and the new *Wolfenstein Multiplayer Test*, so get those challenges in now by e-mail to letters@pczone.co.uk, with 'Challenge' as the subject.

Now, the moment you've all been waiting for, or at least those of you who got to play in our last two Free-For-Alls... maybe. The *PC ZONE* Star Players of the Month for our August Free-For-All were, JP:1mA:, -=[-A-]=-, MoonOnAStick, Trabiscus and dudemyster. The *PC ZONE* Star Players of the Month for our September Free-For-All were [IX] Ken Korda (no relation as far as I'm aware), [IX] Forbes, [IX] KKnD, Beef1.J.EDGE, [GM] Martin [GUN], -=2K1-Edgecrusher=-, :USD=The Frag Meister and -=GHD=Beef-. If I've spelt your name wrong, tough. Pick some sensible good old fashioned ones next time like Deathlord or something like that. Well done to you all, whoever the hell you all are. And remember, next time it could be you who's getting a mention here, so don't miss the next For-For-All on Monday November 5.

FREE-FOR-ALL

The PlayingFields

Monday Nov 5, 2001

7:00pm – 10.00pm

FREE-FOR-ALL

COUNTER STRIKE: TWO SERVERS

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Dave Woods	KID UNKNOWN
Richie Shoemaker	ZAPATERO
Martin Korda	NAMELESS ONE
Anthony Holden	SHOKUPAN
Colin Mackleworth	M.A.C.H.I.N.E
Matthew Cheshire	BURNSIDE
David McCandless	MAQUA
Paul Presley	I R BABOON
Phil Clark	SHIT KICKER
Mark Hill	LEATHERFACE

PC ZONE Free-For-All

GETTING CONNECTED

Get ready for some hot fragging action

Not in the main challenge? You can still get your arses whipped by joining the Free-For-All. Due to the massive popularity of our *Counter-Strike* server and the frustration experienced by many of you while trying to get a game over the last couple of Free-For-Alls, we've decided to run two Counter-Strike servers instead of just one. Which means double the chance of getting a go.

To join the *Counter-Strike* FFA, from the opening *Counter-Strike* menu click 'Play CS' then 'Internet Games' and 'Filter'. Check the box for 'Are In My Favourites List' and uncheck the other boxes.

Now click 'Filter' again, and click 'Add Server' then type: 195.149.48.59:27016 to join the first server or 195.149.48.58:27016 to join the second one. You should now see a server called 'PC ZONE Challenge' listed on your screen. Double click on this server to join it. The password is *pczone*.

Servers will be available for practice from 12noon. Maps will cycle every 15 minutes to allow everyone a chance to play, so keep trying. If you have any problems connecting, telephone 020 7388 0004 on the day of the challenge.

HAVE A GO

PC ZONE GAME SERVERS

Provided by www.games-world.net

The *PC ZONE* game servers are now more popular than ever and to ensure only *PC ZONE* readers can play on them, we've decided to password them all. Don't worry though, every month we'll be printing the password you need to get fragging.

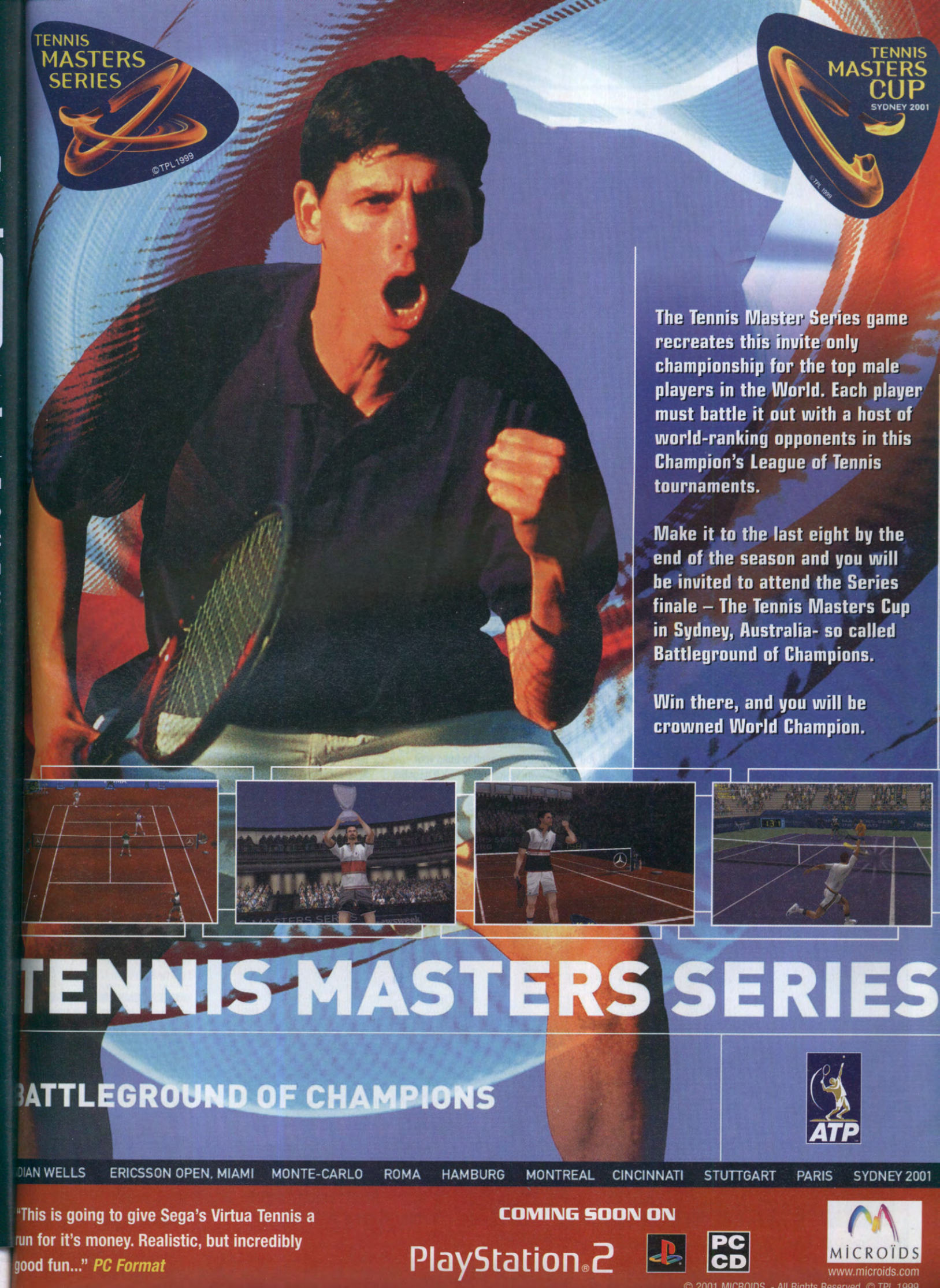
***Quake III: Arena* Public Server #1 – 194.93.134.24.27966**
***Quake III: Fortress* Public Server #1 – 194.93.134.24.27968**

***Counter-Strike* Public Server #1 – 194.93.134.49:27015**
***Counter-Strike* Public Server #2 – 194.93.134.49:27020**
***Counter-Strike* Public Server #3 – 194.93.134.51:27015**
***Counter-Strike* Public Server #4 (*PC ZONE* map pack) – 194.93.134.51:27020**

***Unreal Tournament* Public Server #1 – 194.93.134.52:7787**
***Unreal Tournament* Public Server #2 – 194.93.134.52:7777**

***Team Fortress Classic* Public Server #1 – 194.93.134.50:27015**
***Team Fortress Classic* Public Server #2 – 194.93.134.50:27020**

Password: double


TENNIS MASTERS SERIES
©TPL 1999
TENNIS MASTERS CUP
SYDNEY 2001
The Tennis Master Series game recreates this invite only championship for the top male players in the World. Each player must battle it out with a host of world-ranking opponents in this Champion's League of Tennis tournaments.
Make it to the last eight by the end of the season and you will be invited to attend the Series finale – The Tennis Masters Cup in Sydney, Australia- so called Battleground of Champions.
Win there, and you will be crowned World Champion.
TENNIS MASTERS SERIES
BATTLEGROUND OF CHAMPIONS
ATP
DIAN WELLS
ERICSSON OPEN, MIAMI
MONTE-CARLO
ROMA
HAMBURG
MONTREAL
CINCINNATI
STUTTGART
PARIS
SYDNEY 2001
"This is going to give Sega's Virtua Tennis a run for it's money. Realistic, but incredibly good fun..." PC Format
COMING SOON ON
PlayStation 2
PC CD
MICROIDS
www.microids.com
© 2001 MICROIDS. - All Rights Reserved. © TPL 1999

Some of the later battles get a bit hectic.

Build city components here. The choice, as you can see, is very limited.

KOHAN: IMMORTAL SOVEREIGNS

£29.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

We gave *Chris Anderson* a real-time strategy role-playing game just to confuse him. It worked, obviously

There are games that strive to do everything, attempting to please everyone at the same time. Usually though, they fail abysmally, excelling in some areas and lacking sadly in others. *Kohan* is one of those games, making such a half-hearted effort at every facet of gameplay that it gives you the impression the developers decided initially they wanted a game that catered for everyone, but couldn't be bothered going to all that effort and buggered off down the pub instead.

At its heart *Kohan* is a real-time strategy game with fantasy characters. It's not entirely dissimilar to *WarCraft* or *Age Of Empires II*, with building and resource management elements and, of course, plenty of fighting. However, it also has elements of role-play, with units gaining in experience for every kill and growing stronger, faster and generally more powerful if you can keep them alive long enough. This is a great idea in theory, except you will only keep these units for one mission, so there is no incentive to keep them alive – when you start the next mission, you just have to go through the whole process again with new units. There is resource management in the sense you have to build new components for your cities (such as barracks and blacksmiths for your military units), but the only evidence you see of this is a small icon in the city window – you don't see your new buildings on the landscape. There's even a nod to *Civilization* in the use of Settlers to build new cities, but in all the time I've played the game I've never had to build one. There are so many cities that are easy to capture and control in every mission you never need to build your own, which pretty much negates the need for these units in the first place.

SIMPLE AS PIMPLES

Aside from the half-arsed nods at elements of gameplay from different genres, *Kohan* is likely to keep you mildly entertained for at least a day or two, always threatening to get better than it actually is but never fulfilling its promise. Ultimately, it's a rather simplistic RTS which follows all the rules you would expect and, as such, offers no real challenge to seasoned RTS veterans. Visually it's nothing to write home about either. It looks inferior even when compared to the original *Age Of Empires*, which came out years ago. In retrospect, I wouldn't be at all surprised if this game had been developed three or four years ago and has finally been given a release way after the developers originally intended. In technological terms, it plays and feels like a game that time forgot. That's not to say that *Kohan* is awful, it just doesn't shine when put alongside the best of the current fantasy RTS crop. It's passable, but only just. PCZ

This is *Kohan*'s concession to story. Excellent.

"Likely to keep you mildly entertained for a day or two, always threatening to get better than it actually is"

IN PERSPECTIVE

Age Of Empires 2 and *WarCraft 2* are both good examples of how to do things right in this genre. *Kohan* is a good example of how to do things as though you can't be bothered do them.

Age of Empires 2

WarCraft 2

Kohan

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 233 Memory 64Mb **RECOMMENDED SYSTEM** PII 400 with 128Mb RAM

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Combines role-playing and real-time strategy • Huge battles in later missions • Easy to get into

DOWNERS Awful graphics • Too simplistic for experienced players • It looks like it came out about four years too late

50 Distinctly average

PC CD ROM
Windows 95 & 98

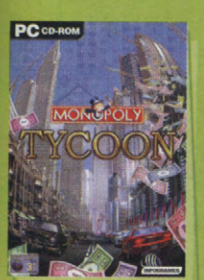
deep red

INFOGRAMES

BAG 'EM WITH A SUPERMARKET!

It's a fast moving city so build a business that will attract the punters. Know what they want, move with the times, bankrupt opponents and get filthy rich double quick.

• Strategy simulation game • Multi-player • Evolves from 1930's - modern day

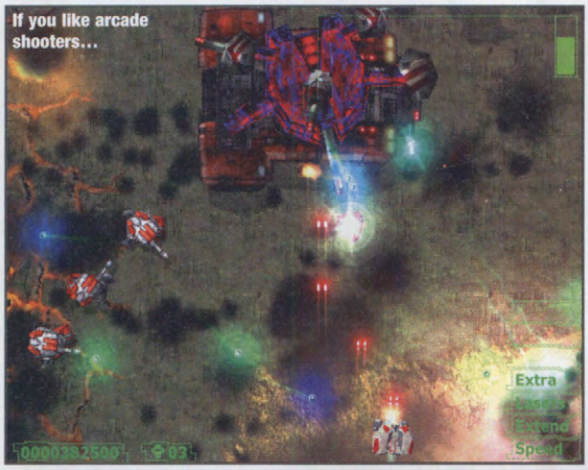


www.monopolytycoon.com

MONOPOLY
TYCOON

BANKRUPT YOUR OPPONENTS
BEFORE THEY BANKRUPT YOU

© 2001 Infogrames Interactive, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Infogrames and the Infogrames logo are the trademarks of Infogrames Entertainment S.A. MONOPOLY is a trademark of Hasbro, Inc. © 2001 Hasbro International Inc. All rights reserved. Licensing by Hasbro Consumer Products. Published by Infogrames. Developed by Deep Red. Windows® is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. ® denotes Reg. US Patent & TM office.



STAR MONKEY

US$14.95 (www.smallrockets.com) • Small Rockets • Out now

Dave Woods, our very own star monkey, is on hand to adjudicate

Take one ship (or three if you're going to be pedantic), add power-ups, waves of alien ships (50 different types), swirling things and bosses, a vertical scroll and a decent soundtrack and you've got all the ingredients for *Star Monkey*. Or any other half-decent vertical shooter for that matter. Where *Star Monkey* excels is in providing the key qualities in spades. Weapons and power-ups are balanced, so that if you lose a life you don't necessarily lose your other two in quick succession. And cleverly, while you're topping up with extras you need to keep taking regular doses of speed (the first power-up selection) or risk moving slower than enemy bullets. The fully rendered 3D graphics, although rather overbearing to start off with are highly atmospheric and involving, and rarely a second goes by without lightning fizzing, or spinny things whirling past you.

Star Monkey also provides the one vital ingredient of twitch gaming – the feeling that you're in an impossible situation when you somehow enter 'the zone' and perform impossible acrobatics to extract yourself. What's more, the developers have realised that key to the philosophy of arcade games like this is the high score, so you can log onto the Internet and compare and contrast scores from others, which only spurs you on to having 'one more go'.

So, just another retro release then. But, while some people think that vertical shooters and the like have had their day, others ignore their rantings, download these games on the cheap and have a whale of a time for 15 minutes each and every day. So, *Star Monkey* isn't ground-breaking and it isn't pushing the PC forward as an entertainment platform. So what? Games like this rely on pure reactions and hand-to-eye co-ordination, and whether you like it or not, these are qualities that are never going to go out of fashion.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 300 **Memory** 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 8Mb 3D card **WE SAY** PII 400 64Mb RAM, 12Mb 3D card

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Fantastically balanced • Smooth difficulty curve • Graphics are excellent

DOWNERS "Retro muck" as Martin would say

78 A real blast

EVIL TWIN

£29.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

Martin Wharmby explores his darker side

Platform games will forever be synonymous with consoles. The PC hasn't had a decent platform game in ages, and while *Evil Twin* is full of clever ideas, it's hardly going to revolutionalise the genre.

Evil Twin revolves around Cyprien, an anti-social orphan who gets himself into all sorts of trouble by having a worryingly over-active imagination. Which means the story turns out to be a convoluted mishmash of LSD-induced dreams and *The Nightmare Before Christmas* – perfect for a platform game.

The controls for Cyprien are quite intuitive, and with the joypad, it's a joy to play and extremely easy to pick up. The graphics are above average, with good quality textures and some excellent special effects, but again, there's nothing in this department that will make you sit up and take particular notice. Sound, unfortunately, is a low point, with uninspiring music and pathetic voice-acting spoiling the otherwise excellent atmosphere that the rest of the game creates so convincingly.

The levels and action are entertaining and well thought out, and there is an added bonus of being able to switch to a first-person mode while aiming. Another nice touch is the ability to change into Cyprien's alter ego, SuperCyp, who has a collection of superhuman skills that add depth and an extra dimension to the proceedings.

If you're looking for a challenging and entertaining platformer with a clever twist and varied well-thought-out levels, then you need look no further – just don't go expecting anything new, innovative or ground-breaking.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P3 500 **Memory** 128Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 16Mb 3D card and game pad **WE SAY** Don't go there without a high-end P3 or 32Mb 3D card

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Great graphics • Intuitive controls • 'Different' storyline

DOWNERS 'Different' storyline • Awful sound • Uncompelling gameplay

75 Naughty but nice

"I'm Sam I am!"

The old 'Luxury Moonlit Cruise' trick didn't fool Cyprien.

No, we don't know what's going on either.

It really is as bad as it looks.

You can make a world class third division side.

DIRECTOR OF FOOTBALL

£29.99 • Empire Interactive • Out now

Mark Hill travels back in time

Remember the good old days on the Amiga and Atari ST, when 300 new games were released every month and half of them were football management sims? Well, as long as you haven't played any games since then there's a good chance you'll enjoy *Director Of Football*. Even the title harks back to a more innocent age. The problem is so do the graphics, interface and overall design.

The idea is to control every aspect of a football team, from the finances (including stock market reports) to the sweaty day-to-day grind in the changing rooms. Things go awry from the start, when you're asked to choose a photographed face to represent yourself before choosing your team and deciding whether you have a poor, average or excellent squad. Realism doesn't get a look in. It doesn't get any better. The interface is one of the worst we've seen, making something as simple as team selection or browsing the transfer market a truly mammoth task, and the actual games are played through an ancient isometric engine recalling *Match Day* on the Spectrum.

There are some good ideas tucked away among the bewildering number of tactical options (motivational talks and influencing your players on the pitch among them) but none of them have any real bearing as I found out after trying out a 0-0-10 formation and coming out an easy 4-1 winner. *Director Of Football* is fun for about ten minutes, but you cannot possibly take it seriously.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32 Mb RAM
WE SAY Yeah, whatever

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Nostalgic value • Loads of tactical options

DOWNERS Could have been made 15 years ago • Dreadful interface • Tactical farce

23 What year is this?! Who's the president?!

THE WEAKEST LINK

£24.99 • Activision • Out now

Dave Woods is our weakest link, and didn't put up much resistance when we told him to review this or else

Despite our protestations, Activision refused to send us a copy of *The Weakest Link* last month on the grounds that we might not give it a good score. Well, guess what?

Let's dig further, though, shall we? First-off, and admittedly a purely opinionated fact, *Weakest Link* (theTV show) isn't as good as *Millionaire* and Anne Robinson is the most annoying woman on TV since Sandi Toksvig (and for that matter, about as intimidating as the diminutive 'comedienne').

Now to the computer game. The developers might have transported all of the elements from the original across faithfully, but for some reason they've also added diabolical 3D avatars that don't move their lips while speaking, and say the same thing over and over again.

Then there's the logistical nightmare that arises because *The Weakest Link* doesn't run a multiple-choice format. So, instead of having to type in the correct answer and it having to recognise spelling mistakes, you're given four letters and you have to pick the one the correct answer starts with. So immediately you're given the choice to guess, which, seeing as there's no real money on the outcome, becomes the lazy option. Even worse, if you wait a few seconds it reveals all four answers, which nearly always gives it to you on a plate.

In its favour it comes with a reputed 100, 000 questions and if you play it 'properly' in full multi-player mode it does provide an edge of tactics and backstabbing that *Millionaire* can only dream of. Overall though, out of the two big-name shows and PC games, there's only one that's a bit rubbish and it's this one. Goodbye.

TECH SPECS

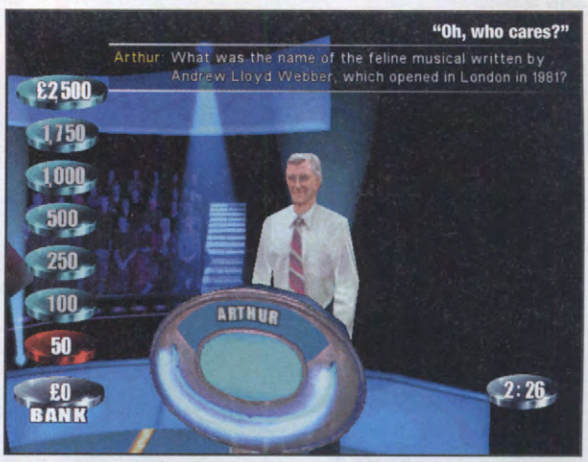
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 300 **Memory** 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** Up to 64Mb before saying goodbye

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS You get to vote your mates off

DOWNERS You don't get to vote Anne Robinson off • It's muck

45 Goodbye



TOON CAR

£19.99 • Akaei • Out now

"A driving sim set in Newcastle?"
***Mark Hill* gets it wrong again**

We all know the immense multiplayer pleasures of *Counter-Strike* and *Quake III*, but there is one game that rivals them which can only be played on an N64 (or an emulator): *Super Mario Kart*. It may sound implausible to someone who hasn't played it, but the Nintendo classic still ranks as one of the most fun games ever made when played with friends. *Toon Cars* doesn't quite come close to that standard, but among all the *Mario Kart* wannabees that have been released over the years, it definitely stands out as an enjoyable piece of software.

Developed by Spanish outfit Revistronic, *Toon Cars* eschews all realism in favour of physics and handling that just *feel* right, while piling on humorous touches, cartoony graphics and all sorts of power-ups. Progress is made through the time-honoured method of unlocking tracks while the races themselves are made unpredictable by track obstacles and the power-ups. You do sometimes spend too much time out of sight of other cars almost as if it were a rally simulation before a rocket hits you from behind and everyone overtakes you right at the end, but split-screen mode is a good laugh. This is as close as we're ever going to get to *Mario Kart* on the PC.

Boulders can be bounced around the track to knock off other drivers.

There are loads of different modes to explore, including obstacle courses.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** A P300 with 64Mb RAM

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Impressive graphics • Good multiplayer fun • Shares *Mario Kart*'s spirit

DOWNERS Multiplayer options limited • Power-ups uninspiring

72 Not quite *Super Mario Kart*

Crowd around your monitor for some split-screen action.

PARKAN: IRON STRATEGY

Neutral warbots can be captured and used for your own devices.

It won't change your world, but there's a decent game lying behind the dodgy graphics.

Hi-tech robots meet low-tech visuals. In-house automaton *Chris Anderson* investigates

First impressions of *Iron Strategy* were far from favourable. The first thing I noticed were the utterly awful terrain graphics. While not exactly pixellated, they look blocky close up with gaudy colouring completing the impression that the graphic artists literally slapped the terrain together in a matter of minutes. Things could only get better from here, and thankfully, they did. What seems at first glance to be a rudimentary shoot 'em up with strategy leanings soon develops into a mildly engrossing robot-building action game with several innovative features. For example, the ability to build your own warbots and send them into battle while you command the whole proceedings from the safety of your 'captain' robot is a nice touch. Missions usually involve capturing key buildings, which you can use to build up your robotic army, and then wading into enemy buildings and taking them over, or just shooting the hell out of enemy warbots.

The ability to build your own robots is particularly appealing. You can change any aspect of your bots during the construction process, including choosing the weapons they will use, how big they will be (certain functions can only be carried out by warbots of the correct size) and what armour they will use. *Iron Strategy* is unlikely to amaze you at any point, but if you can see past the dodgy graphics and often clumsy interface, you will find a game that's capable of taking up your time for at least a few days.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium II 266 **Memory** 64 mb **WE SAY** 128Mb ram recommended to avoid slow-down in big battles.

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Succesful blend of action and strategy • Design your own warbots and command them in battle • Resource management

DOWNERS The graphics are awful • Interface designed by chimps • Did I mention the graphics?

60 Bad presentation can't hide what is bascially a decent game

Good balance?

Your top star's leaving.

Your manager wants a rise.

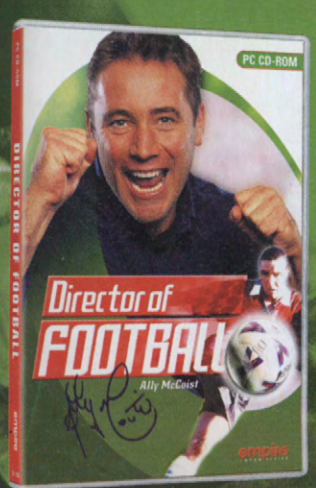
Your board want new prices.

Your taxman wants your books.

Your bankers want your shirt.

Your fans want your head.

Can you take over?



"Without doubt the most authentic and comprehensive football management simulation"
Ally McCoist

www.stufftheboard.net

©2001 heart-line GmbH. Published by Empire Interactive

empire INTERACTIVE

BUDGET ZONE

Once again, it's time to rummage through the bargain bin

MEASLY SKINFLINTS Martin Wharmby, Rhianna Pratchett and Martin Korda

COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES

BEST BUY

Sold Out • £4.99 • Out now

Commandos was, and still is, a bloody hard game. A lot of people barely made it past the first couple of levels of this isometric infiltrate 'em up. Others became so absorbed by its impressive 2D graphics and addictive gameplay that we took its World War II setting to our hearts, and allowed it to take over our lives.

You take control of a team of highly trained commandos, each with individual abilities and skills, which makes the game relatively open-ended and adds to its replayability factor. The one downside of *Commandos* is that it's all too easy to have your team wiped out by the annoyingly intelligent enemy AI. If you do find yourself with an extra fiver on your hands, this 20 superb strategy game will definitely keep you busy for months. If you've got a spare 30-odd quid, then go for the sequel instead (reviewed issue 108).

PCZVERDICT **78%**

Sadly, the multiple cameras never did support Channel 5...

Where's the little Dutch boy when you need him?

Don't you just want to take them to McDonalds and feed them up?

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

Sold Out • £4.99 • Out now

Reminisce a little with this superb action/adventure that spawned the 3D sneak 'em up and made you swap your guns and ammo for a good old bow and arrow.

Unfortunately the medieval setting is spoilt somewhat by the introduction of the clichéd demons and spider creatures that inhabited so many games of the time. Nowadays it's more for newbies than veterans, because if you love this type of game, you'll probably own it already.

PCZVERDICT **75%**

It may look bad, but it plays superbly.

HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC III

Sold Out • £4.99 • Out now

In all fairness, this stand-alone version of *Heroes Of Might & Magic III* is really just an add-on that happens to include the original game. The gameplay and graphics are virtually identical to the original, although it's substantially harder in this incarnation. Still as terrifyingly addictive as ever but looking extremely basic by today's standards, you'll find that if you can look past the dated visuals, you'll discover one of the best turn-based strategy games of all time.

PCZVERDICT **72%**

Oh spare me the excitement! Please! I beg you!

CUTTHROATS

Sold Out • £4.99 • Out now

Sailing the high seas with a bunch of pirates catching scurvy isn't nice. Playing this is even worse. In fact, after playing *Cutthroats*, scurvy would be a welcome change, and would at least make things a bit more interesting. As what you have here is a valiant attempt to create a strategy game based around pirates, which sadly fails tragically in almost every department.

The lacklustre graphics and monumentally dull gameplay conspire to send it to a watery grave. If you're a budding Long John Silver you may discover a small amount of fun, but you'll soon realise *Cutthroats* is repetitive and boring. Go out and buy a fake parrot for your fiver instead.

PCZVERDICT 33%

GANGSTERS: ORGANISED CRIME

Sold Out • £4.99 • Out now

Set in the fictional city of New Temperance, *Gangsters* puts you in charge of your own gang, in a game of corruption and control. Having an isometric strategy game where you try to take over a 1920s city through any means necessary seems like a good idea, so it's unfortunate that *Gangsters* proved to be inadequate.

It's too complicated, it looks awful, it doesn't play particularly well and you have to read through a huge manual to understand what the hell is going on. The sequel was marginally better, but only just, and unless you like a complicated game look elsewhere.

Looks interesting, doesn't it? No, not really.

PCZVERDICT 53%

The giant New Zealander strikes again.

JONAH LOMU RUGBY

Sold Out • £4.99 • Out now

Jonah Lomu is one of the few rugby games available on the PC. While the graphics are pretty basic, it's fun to play and relatively atmospheric, although the commentary seems oddly out of place as it's far more polished than the visuals.

As violent as the real thing is, *Jonah Lomu Rugby* fails to recreate the sense of manic blood-spilling and eye-gouging action usually involved with the sport, but only because the graphics look so abysmal now. Let's face it, if you're going to have violence in a game, you need to be able to see it. Despite its age however, it's still one of the best rugby games on the PC, though it's not as if it's up against much opposition now is it?

PCZVERDICT 59%

Come on, I'll take you all on.

REDGUARD

Sold Out • £4.99 • Out now

Redguard. Rubbish name for a rubbish pirate action adventure game. In fact, as names go, it stinks like a scurvy-ridden corpse, used as a public lavatory for rats.

The basic storyline sees our hero Cyrus returning to his ravaged homeland. You then spend what seems like an eternity listening to everyone explaining what has happened to the village. You then wander around solving a few puzzles, listening to loads more people talk at you and fighting a few bad guys. I think you get the picture.

Don't waste your time with this. If you want to experience piracy at its best get *Escape from Monkey Island* instead.

PCZVERDICT 29%

VIVA FOOTBALL

Sold Out • £4.99 • Out now

Ever since the *FIFA* series burst onto the scene, endless clones have tried to topple this never-ending series. All have failed, but when *Viva Football* came along, it had a fair old go.

Unfortunately, if *FIFA* is Manchester United, *Viva Football* is now Queens Park Rangers. However, it's still a decent game. The control system is nearly as simple and easy to use as the *FIFA* series, but the graphics are awful and the sound and atmosphere are useless. The added bonus, though, is that you can pit the 1966 England squad against the 1994 Brazil squad, and that's got to be worth a fiver on its own.

Help, I'm being beamed up by aliens.

PCZVERDICT 52%

Shefffield Wednesday in the Premiership? This really is old.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER SEASON 97/98

Sold Out • £4.99 • Out now

This edition made it harder to score, harder to succeed long-term and harder to devise those winning formations. It also introduced real-life major injuries and the chance to compete in multiple leagues at the same time. Since the main reason for buying the game in the first place was to have that season's stats, its value now is almost purely retro. So unless you've got an ancient machine, don't waste your money on this re-release. Why live in the past when the future's up for grabs? Spend your cash on one of the newer versions instead.

PCZVERDICT 48%

FEEDBACK

***Martin Korda* reads through your latest ramblings on two of the year's top games**

IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in *PC ZONE* over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF

EMAIL Or you can email them to us at **letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk** with **Feedback** in the subject line

MAX PAYNE

REVIEWED *PCZ* #107, Oct 2001
SCORE 90%

What we said

"*Max Payne* is innovative and highly polished, a game of wild ideas that has been properly focused to entertain – not to entertain forever, but certainly until the next big thing comes along."

What you thought

✪ Congratulations on a well-balanced and entertaining assessment of *Max Payne*. Richie Shoemaker managed to steer clear of the predictably hysterical hyperbole pedalled by *ZONE*'s rival outfits, whose reviewers currently favour shameless sycophancy over journalistic credibility.

I still think your review was a wee bit generous though. You conclude that this cinematically inspired game is 'properly focused to entertain' but I'm not convinced. I think a more accurate description of *Max* might be that it's a dumbed-down one-gimmick excuse to sell people a great new engine. Its developers are hoping that legions of amateur mappers, hooked on Bullet Time and Molotov Cocktails, will finish the job for them and concoct a suitable range of new levels to make it worth playing for more than a couple of days. Am I the only one who thinks that's a teeny bit lazy? I suppose some pen-pusher at Remedy thought: "DIY games, there's an idea."

Setting aside those reservations, I would thoroughly recommend *Max Payne* as an atmospheric and entertaining arcade romp but perhaps it's time we started raising our expectations. Can you imagine how incredible *Max* would be if Remedy had placed the same emphasis on player freedom as other developers have been doing recently? One day someone will devise a game that combines *Max Payne*'s stunning visuals and innovative gameplay with the sort of depth and intelligence offered by a certain Warren Spector masterpiece.

Max Payne is an opportunity missed and gaming Valhalla is still a few steps away.

Matt Weaver

✪ I have to say I love *Max Payne*. Not since *Unreal Tournament* have I felt such excitement when ripping open a game's packaging and shoving the CD into my machine. However, your review did not really justify why it deserves 90 per cent. Of course, the main feature is the Bullet Time, which works very well (if you're quick enough you can even dodge bullets), and it makes for some cool gun battles. OK, so it's based on movies such as *The Matrix*, but who cares? It's lots of fun playing in movies and *Max Payne* makes good use of its film influences.

> **"To be honest, the lack of thinking does actually improve this game as you don't get stuck solving countless puzzles"**
>
> **LIAM BENNIONI ON *MAX PAYNE***

Your review left out some key things – like the fact every single bullet is tracked to its target and doesn't just hit their target instantly like most other games. There's also the self-adjusting difficulty based on your performance in the game. The rotating pause camera makes for some excellent-looking screenshots (as well as some weird ones) and the cinematic deaths are a nice touch. The AI is perhaps a letdown by today's standards but honestly, with Bullet Time, there's not a lot enemies can do about being shot except to shoot back. The only thing I didn't like were the nightmare sequences, but they are easily bypassed once you know where to go.

Max Payne also seems mostly finished, only one patch being released a few days after the release date, which fixed a couple of bugs. How often do games require several patches in quick succession after their release? All in all an awesome game and worthy of your *PC ZONE* Classic award. It may be short, but as the old adage goes, it's not how long it is, it's what you do with it. And you can do a lot with *Max Payne*.

Mike Flynn

✪ I've just been playing possibly the best game ever: *Max Payne*. It has everything I look for in a shooter. I agree it doesn't take a rocket scientist to play this game, but I don't agree that it's totally brainless, because you can approach enemies with different tactics. But to be honest, the lack of thinking does actually improve this game as you don't get stuck solving countless puzzles – you just get killed a lot.

I also liked the great use of guns that mainly use bullets, rather than crappy alien weapons, which would have ruined the Bullet Time feature. It is a little short, but I found myself wanting to replay my favourite save points over and over again. This is unquestionably the best action game out there.

Liam Bennion

✪ Before I begin, I would like to say your magazine is amazing and I buy it every month. Anyway, the reason for me writing to you is to express my true feelings about the sheer excellence of the one and only *Max Payne*. It's

Just about everyone who's written in loves *Max Payne*.

"I said take off your shoes beore coming into my house."

totally class – without a doubt it has to be one of the best games created for the PC (except for *Half-Life*). The graphics are mind-blowing and as for Bullet Time… ahhhh, could that be any better? It's so satisfying to dive forward at an enemy in slow motion, while firing bullets into their cranium, and watching them slump to the floor like a sack of potatoes. OK, maybe the AI isn't great, but the gameplay sure makes up for its absence. If you like video games, then I suggest you go out and buy this game now. I promise you won't regret it.

Adam Hall

I have just bought *Max Payne*, and have a few things to say. The plot itself is rather pathetic and totally unbelievable, the cut-scenes and voice-acting are incredibly cheesy (I mean – comic strips in this day and age). The game is also incredibly linear.

However, the gameplay shows a lot of thought, with plenty of nice touches, like being able to blow up TVs showing crappy soaps, and of course, the Bullet Time. What an innovation that is – can you imagine a sequel with *Deus Ex*-style freedom, and those Bullet Time sequences? Until that happens, I'll just enjoy myself jumping into a room and activating Bullet Time, spraying bullets everywhere from my double Berettas as I fly gracefully through the air.

Tristan McCarthy

Comment

So you like it then? That's good, because so do we, hence the Classic award. So it's too short and you can't shoot through doors. And sometimes Max's head disappears through a wall, but hey, it's a brilliant game nonetheless. The jury is still out on the way the storyline is presented, but that's just down to personal taste. Richie loved it. I thought it stank, but then again everyone knows I'm a sucker for FMVs.

However, in terms of entertainment, gameplay, originality and, of course, the stunning Bullet Time mode, few other games can even come close to competing. Enjoy it while it lasts, it's an experience that no gamer should deprive themselves of.

***Max Payne* is the way forward for action games. Let's hope other developers take note and improve on the formula rather than just shamelessly ripping it off.**

OPERATION FLASHPOINT

REVIEWED *PCZ* #104, Jul 2001
SCORE 90%

What we said

"Some of you will hate it, there's no getting around that. Most of you, hopefully, will become as absorbed by the atmosphere, engrossed by the gameplay and impressed by the ambition as we are."

What you thought

It's scary, it's brilliant, and it's left me with a cold-blooded killer attitude – to gaming. *Operation Flashpoint* is one of the few games in my lifetime which has easily grabbed my attention, and gets even more engrossing the more you play it. It simply gets more and more addictive, and it becomes harder and harder to stay away. The cosmetic faults are undeniably annoying, but it's impossible to let it get to you as you narrowly avoid being hit by an enemy tank, or spot an enemy foot soldier only metres away – line up the sight, aim, shoot…

It's the best real-life war sim ever. It's so good I might even have to skip my annual morning visit to the shops for the latest version of *Championship Manager* (a game that has given so much). Even the first few missions demonstrate the stark reality that you can't be a Rambo in real-life combat. Hell, it's tough enough to survive just staying back and letting your team deal with it.

Everyone is important to the mission, to such an extent that when you hear the painful words, "Three is down," you can't help but shriek in terror, or curse your own foolhardy gung-ho tactics. It cannot be understated how important this game is for anyone interested in being 'clued-up' in the world of gaming. It shows that even with minor faults, a masterpiece can be achieved. I am so caught up in the game, I'm looking forward to giving the mission editor a go now. Spot on review, for a game that hits the spot.

Jakob Gronkjaer

Operation Flashpoint – what a game, what a marvellous piece of software, but I have one enormous problem with it. It crashes my machine all the time. I mean, I've heard of rushing games to the shelves, but for crying out loud, are we supposed to finish coding this game ourselves? It's about as solid as a drunken granny on a tightrope. Start a mission – crash. Go prone – crash. Open fire – crash. Put in CD – crash. Well maybe not the last one, but you get the idea. And I'm not just talking about blue screen crashes either, I'm talking about full-on reboots, with my computer rebooting from scratch. I paid good money for this game, not a memory test in the boot-up sequence.

It's a crying shame, as the game itself, when it does run, is furiously addictive, extremely playable and totally compelling. Do not buy unless you have a solid (and I mean as solid as a rock) OS and hard drive. Hopefully, future patches will ensure stability.

David Allen

Regarding *Operation Flashpoint*, the reason it hasn't received any criticism from your readers is that it is the first game to come out for a long time that fulfils all expectations. I've been disappointed by so many games – *Black & White*, *Anarchy Online* – yet I haven't got a single bad word to say about this game. I haven't even encountered a single crash or bug.

Jamie, via email

Comment

The letters for this amazing simulation just keep on coming by the sackload. *Operation Flashpoint* is indeed a rare breed. It's realistic, complex and isn't the kind of game you can master within a few hours. However, at the same time it's so compelling and provides so much freedom and fun that it's almost impossible to stop playing it.

Many of us are scared off by complex games, but *Operation Flashpoint* manages to find a near perfect balance between the horror, fear, atmosphere and strategic precision of war and entertainment. Realism and versatility are no bad things, in fact they should be applauded, so long as they don't get in the way of gameplay. In *Operation Flashpoint*'s case, they manage to complement each other perfectly. What's more, you can immerse yourself in the game for weeks on end, especially as you can create your own levels with the brilliant mission editor.

The issue of bugs still rages on, and as we said before, it totally depends on the machine you're running it on. Just look at the contrast between Jamie and David's letters to see what I mean. Upgrade your version with the patches on this month's CD and you should notice a massive difference.

***Operation Flashpoint* is one of the best games of the year so far.**

REALITY CHECK: Medieval Warfare

Go to a bleak Northern outpost and dress up like a fool, we said. *Steve Hill* gets medieval

VS

From the beginning Steve chooses to shield his arse.

A three-pound mace on the back of the head will kill. An axe will kill. A spear will kill."

John Jay Phillips of Conquest (The Society of Anglo-Norman Living History), is pointing out the potential pitfalls of his hobby, none of which is doing anything for my nerves. We're at Bolsover Castle, the centre-point of a small Derbyshire town, and I am only a few hours away from making my debut in the wonderful and frightening world of medieval re-enactment. Despite apparently being more insurable than either cricket or golf, accidents do happen, and John himself cheerfully confesses to having inadvertently severed a friend's nose. Good.

Working in conjunction with English Heritage (www.english-heritage.org.uk), Conquest regularly stage events at a variety of historically important sites. Part historical zealots, part fancy-dress fetishists, they draw their members from all over the UK. A largely friendly bunch, many of them are also strategy game enthusiasts, supplementing their re-enactment shenanigans with the likes of *Age Of Empires* and *Shogun: Total War*. While my preconceptions aren't totally shattered, nobody professes a particular interest in real ale, nobody recites Monty Python sketches verbatim, and nobody introduces themselves as Norman Conquest. As for overweight accountants, there is no more than one in evidence.

CONTENTED VILLAGE

For the purpose of this weekend's proceedings, Conquest have set up camp within the castle grounds. However, you won't see anything from Millets here. All structures are authentically medieval, and it's effectively a 12th-century tented village, replete with surgery, storeroom, kitchen and individual sleeping quarters. I'm not a big camper myself, but some of the quarters look quite cosy, many fitted with beds carved from finest ash, and blankets fashioned from what may or may not be bearskin.

Clothing is equally authentic, and as a guest for the day, I am kindly issued with a bespoke outfit. As a humble townsman, this consists of some natty leather shoes, individual leggings tied to outsized pants, and a bronze-coloured tunic, all topped off with a belt and leather pouch. A padded armour suit is worn over the top, with further protection offered by a pair of gloves and an ill-fitting red and yellow helmet. As for weaponry, I am armed with a stave, essentially a big spear with a hooked blade.

It's a fetching ensemble, but looking around it becomes apparent that I am firmly positioned at the lower end of the food chain. Majestically dressed knights strut around in chain mail and boots, sporting immaculately buffed helmets and wielding glinting swords. It's a fairly arbitrary hierarchy though, as basically anyone who buys a knight's costume automatically becomes a knight, although at around £350 a go it's a sizeable commitment.

"My bemused smile soon disappears when I am caught full in the neck by a spear"

BACK IN BLACK

A Brummie called Rob is a self-styled Black Knight, and it is he who takes all debutees for their initial training. With 19 years in the re-enactment game under his ornamental belt, he reassures us that he has never had a serious injury. He immediately tempers this with a cautionary tale (delivered with slightly too much relish) of a man who had the main artery in his thigh severed by his best friend, had 15 pints of blood pumped into him and died in hospital, leaving a wife and three children behind.

Unperturbed by this horror story, six grown men pair off and aim pointed sticks at each other, alternately striking at the shoulder and leg under The Black Knight's command. Frankly, it's comical, although I soon realise that I am the only one laughing. The rest of the trainees are deadly serious, and seem intent on causing damage to their sparring partners, something I can't bring myself to do with any gusto, as the thought of maiming another person is scarcely more appealing than being on the receiving end.

My bemused smile soon disappears when I am caught full in the neck by a spear violently swiped by my myopic opponent. Squealing like a girl, I wheel away

Steve, seconds before his near mortal wound.

HOW REAL IS HACK 'N' SLASH?

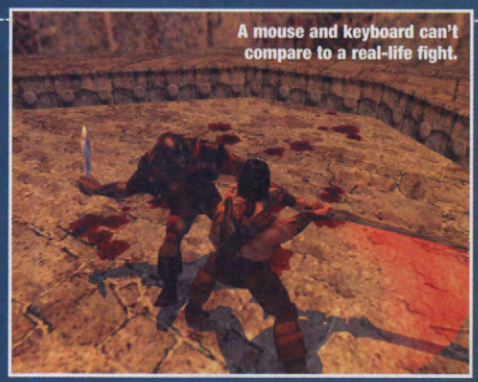
Severance? Let's hope not

For the general commanding an army, re-enactment is essentially a strategic affair. However, for the lowly foot soldier, it's an entirely different experience, with little concept of the overall view of formations and tactics. On the front line of the battle, it's basically you going head to head with the enemy.

In gaming terms, the closest we've played is *Severance*. That said, manoeuvring with the keyboard and slashing with the mouse button is a world away from actually doing it. In reality – or re-enactment – mobility is limited by up to five stone of armour, and wielding a ten-foot spear is not easy, particularly for a chocolate-wristed clown like me.

There are techniques involved in re-enactment though, and an experienced Conquest member will easily get the better of a newcomer. However, safety is paramount, and the idea is to deflect blows downwards to prevent the spear deflecting into anyone's face. Certain areas are out of bounds, but leg, shoulder and even buttocks are all fair game, and in a mass brawl one soldier can open up his opponent to let a team-mate in to strike the killer blow, something we've yet to see in a game.

In conclusion, *Severance* isn't particularly like re-enactment, but due to there being no need for safety considerations, it is probably more like a real battle.



A mouse and keyboard can't compare to a real-life fight.

SEVERANCE

and vainly attempt to stem the crimson gush of blood arcing from my carotid artery. That it should end like this. I have pictured my death many times, but I never envisaged it happening in a sodden field in Derbyshire wearing a pointed helmet and a big nappy. In the event, it seems my initial diagnosis is premature. It's not even a flesh wound, and the rounded end of the faux-weapon has simply bounced off in the manner intended. Well, you can't be too careful.

BATTLE OF THE PRANNETS

By the time the 'real' battle is due, a reasonable crowd has gathered, many worryingly armed with photographic equipment. With the fat accountant providing commentary, and dignity now but a distant memory, the combatants are paraded around the arena in formation. Further entertainment is provided by the destruction of an innocent melon, before battle can commence. In true WWF style, an argument is struck up between two knights, with comedy insults traded. A reasonably violent skirmish ensues, after which we – the townsmen – are sent in to rescue our lord. A scripted attack and retreat follows, and it then becomes a free-for-all, although the knights are clearly the bookies' favourite.

"The enemy is upon us," announces The Black Knight in a thick Midlands accent, and indeed they are, with half a dozen heavily armed knights bearing down on a hapless clutch of ill-prepared townsmen. It's a fearsome sight, and in the heat of the battle my initial reticence disappears as I find myself flailing wildly at a big fat knight, who expertly deflects my amateurish lunges. I'm convinced that I've struck at least a couple of blows, but he either ignores my puny efforts or fails to feel them through his chain mail. Either way, he refuses to fall, launching a counter-attack that sees him swiftly stab me in the back. In accordance with the rules I slump to the ground, where my fellow townsmen lie, dead or dying. It begins to rain. The crowd go home.

Back at the camp, the womenfolk have prepared a handsome feast, and there is something comforting about returning from battle (albeit technically dead) to be fed and watered by fair maidens. But with the rain teeming down and darkness looming, I fear it is time to bid this merry band farewell. It may well escalate into a drunken medieval orgy, but it's not a chance that I'm prepared to take. Taxi! PZ

Details on Conquest can be found at www.conquest.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

HOW REAL IS REAL-TIME STRATEGY?

So just how realistic can an RTS be when compared to a blood-soaked battlefield, or in this case, a rain-soaked one?

In many ways, re-enactment is a 'real life' version of a real-time strategy game, at least for whoever is in charge. In fact, certain games have covered the same period (1066-1215) that Conquest replicate. One such game was the long-forgotten *Knights And Merchants*, a medieval RTS of minor repute. There are also parallels to be drawn with both the *Age Of Empires* and the *Settlers* series, and with more battle-oriented titles such as *Shogun: Total War*.

As a former tester, Conquest's John Phillips certainly knows his games, and claims that "they get to the point of being so historically accurate they're not fun to play."

He goes on: "A problem with a lot of the games that I see is that they don't really show how critical morale and training would be on troops. For example, in 1178 an army of 150 Norman knights and archers beat an army of 3,500 Welsh infantry men on the basis that they were better trained, better equipped, and better motivated. They're getting quite close to that in *Shogun: Total War*, where actually you can see that when things get broken and destroyed, that can break the morale of the units around them. Everybody's quite keen to see what this follow-on – the Crusades one – looks like."

Another key difference is that in games, troops generally do as you tell them, which is not always the case in reality. As John says: "In real life, even in some of the small-scale battles we've done where the army only covers 100 yards across the battlefield, telling the unit on the right flank 50 yards from you to get moving can actually involve physically running over to them and telling them. By that time something entirely different could have happened on the other side. In a game, you've got the advantage of a point-and-click mouse: you can hit pause, issue orders, slow it down. It might be handy, but it's not particularly realistic."

However, possibly the most unrealistic part of nearly all RTS games, is the way a solitary soldier with a spear can destroy a castle all by himself. I even gave it a try (see below), and unsurprisingly it didn't work.

And of course, nobody's going to get hurt playing a PC game. "With the weapons we use, it would be very easy to seriously injure if not maim the people we re-enact with," admits John. If most people saw video footage of a true replication of a medieval battlefield, they would be absolutely and utterly appalled. The actual detail, the wounds – based on looking at grave finds – are horrendous. There's nothing nice about it, nothing pretty about it. It was brutal, violent, ugly."

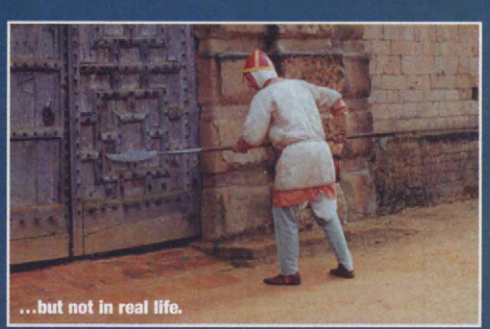
He should try working here.

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

OTHER RTS GAMES

Shogun, the most realistic RTS to date.

A spearman can destroy a castle in *AOEII*...



...but not in real life.

PCZONE

COMING NEXT ISSUE

BUMPER CHRISTMAS ISSUE

MAMMOTH REVIEWS SECTION

Including...

EXCLUSIVE REVIEWS

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON

World Exclusive review of one the most hotly awaited shooters of the year

ALIENS VS PREDATOR 2

Three sides, but only one can win. We bring you the world's first review of Monolith Production's stunning sequel

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER, C&C: RENEGADE, EMPIRE EARTH, AQUANOX, FIFA 2002, COMANCHE 4, POOL OF RADIANCE, STRONGHOLD AND LOADS MORE...

IN-DEPTH PLAYTEST

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

The first UK look at the playable code

CHRISTMAS HARDWARE ROUND-UP

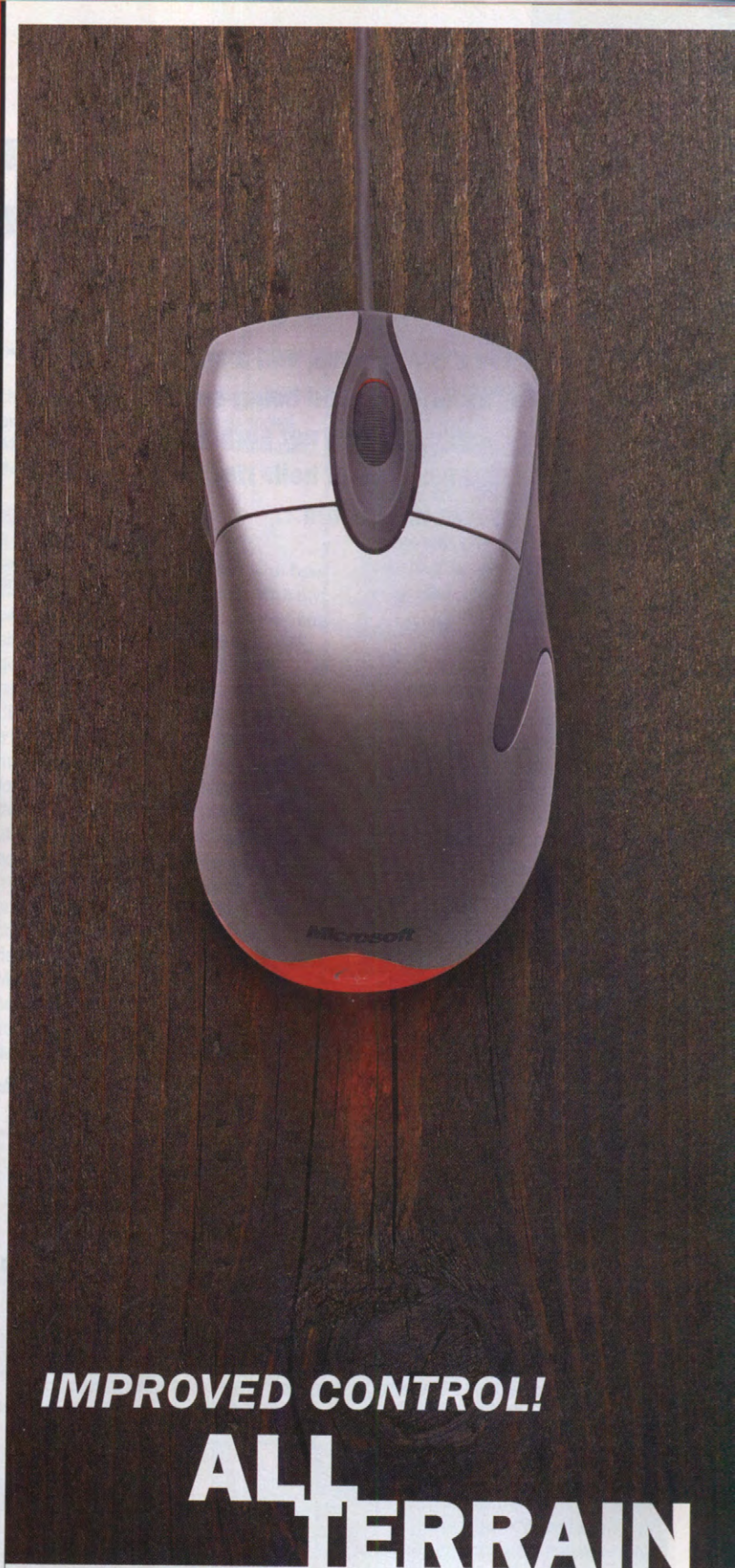
The ultimate guide to what's hot and what's not for your PC this Christmas

---

FULLY-PLAYABLE DEMOS

Two disks packed with the latest and best demos around

ON SALE THURSDAY NOVEMBER 15



IMPROVED CONTROL!

ALL TERRAIN

Put the most powerful optical technology through its paces with Microsoft® IntelliMouse® Explorer. The onboard IntelliEye™ optical sensor now scans its location up to 6,000 times a second to ensure supremely accurate, responsive steering. Designed to glide on practically any surface in extra comfort and style, it's got five programmable buttons for storing your favourite routes and all new soft touch trimmings. Available in right hand drive.

For more information visit
www.drive-me-wild.co.uk

© 2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, the Microsoft logo, IntelliEye, and IntelliMouse are trademarks or registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the US and/or other countries.

Microsoft®

SILENT RUNNING

Stick five fans in a metal case, add a small device with metallic plates spinning round being caressed by an ever gyrating needle, and it's not surprising your PC sounds like a small corner of hell. *Tim Ponting* investigates how to kill the din...

The chances are at some stage in your life you're going to have to share a lounge with a thoughtless, relentlessly noisy partner. You know the sort. Just when you want to curl up with a quiet art movie, they're there, huffing and puffing, whining unremittingly, as obtrusive as a distorted guitar in a string quartet.

If your PC resides in your living room, then you know exactly what I mean. I'd got used to it until my brother pointed out that my machine, permanently connected to the Internet, was like a wasp's nest in the corner of the room, and that my playing *Counter-Strike* online while my partner watched a film was akin to watching a drive-in movie with your car's engine left on.

PCs are noisy beasts, never more so than today. My music studio PC has two case fans, a fan in the power supply, a fan on the graphics card, three mini fans in a hard drive cooler within which is a 15,000 rpm SCSI hard drive – not to mention the other two EIDE drives! It's a cacophony, audible from every room in the house.

You may be used to the noise your PC makes, but have you ever thought about shutting the little blighter up? It's surprisingly simple, and if you're already considering upgrading your PC, it's not outrageously expensive either. We consulted UK experts QuietPC.com who supplied a solution for one of our older test PCs – see the walkthrough for full details.

The goal when silencing your PC is to minimise the fan noise and hard drive clatter without compromising the cooling performance. This is achieved by using special quiet fan parts and by enclosing the hard drive in a special sleeve with a built-in heatsink to conduct heat outwards.

For the most part, you won't have to make many physical changes to your PC unless you use more extreme measures (see below). However, the drive enclosure will require a spare 5.25 inch drive bay if your hard drive is currently in a 3.5 inch one.

MAD FOR IT

With the exception of the SilentDrive enclosure, the pieces we used to silence our PC were just 'quiet' versions of conventional components. However, there are some pretty wild quiet solutions as well!

Flower power: the Zalman Flower Cooler

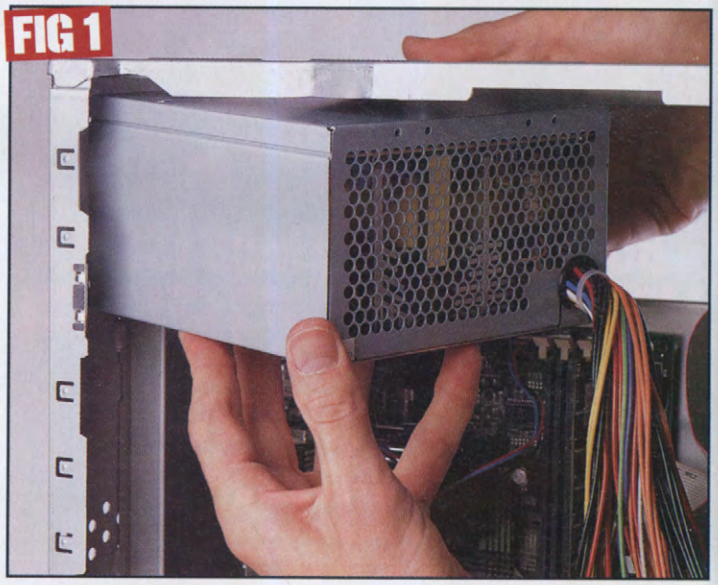
See the picture to the right? This is not some rare sea anemone, but the mad-looking Zalman 'Flower Cooler', for use with socketed CPUs such as Athlons or Celerons. It consists of 56 highly conductive copper fins clamped between two aluminium blocks ground to a fine polished surface for mounting on the processor itself. Once the unit is in place, looking like some demented muppet haircut, a large (thus slow and quiet) fan is suspended above using a special mount that protrudes from a fitting sharing the AGP/first PCI slot screw fittings. As long as you have a large case and the PSU doesn't get tangled in the muppet hair, it's almost silent – and the fan cools the mother-board chipset too if you care to replace the existing heatsink with a special high efficiency heatsink as well!

And don't forget your video card fan as some of these are surprisingly noisy. This can be replaced by another copper Zalman cooler, with the fins bent sideways to minimise its depth, though it will still prevent the use of the PCI slot next to the AGP one.

WALKTHROUGH

We had an old test PC that was too noisy for words. After some key modifications you can only tell it's switched on when you stick your head right next to it. Now that's progress...

FIG 1



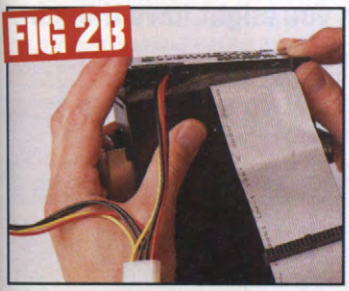
STAGE ONE

Replacing the power supply unit

FIG 1 This is an extremely straightforward task. First, buy a nice quiet PSU – we recommend a 300W device. Though many motherboards and processors are happy with a cheaper 250W rated unit, the chances are one day you'll need the full 300W monty – especially if you intend to go Athlon in the future. Plus it can fix certain USB problems.

Start by disconnecting all the power cables from your drives, then the case fan (if relevant), then finally the motherboard. We carried out the processor fan replacement at this point while we had uninterrupted access to the mobo. Simply screw in the new PSU and reconnect all the power cables.

FIG 2A



STAGE TWO
Installing a SilentDrive enclosure

FIG 2A First of all, you need to test the thermal characteristics of your drive in its current state. Attach the thermometer strip supplied with the SilentDrive to your hard drive, run the PC in normal use for a couple of hours, then make a note of the temperature. Visit your hard drive manufacturer's site, check out its maximum recommended operating temperature which will hopefully be considerably higher than the reading from the thermometer strip. Next, you can begin installation of the drive in the SilentDrive enclosure. The drive slips between the two conductive metal plates with its connector array facing the sleeve opening.

FIG 2B Once the drive is snugly inside the enclosure, you need to manoeuvre it into the 5.25 inch bay you'll be using. Make sure it's the right way up and slip the power cable through the foam pad supplied. Connect the power and data cables to the back of the drive itself and carefully align the enclosure cap that compresses the foam pad before clicking it into place. Now fix the drive into the drive bay and test for a couple of hours. Remove the hard drive from the enclosure and check the temperature once more. It'll be higher than before, but hopefully within the drive tolerance. If not, SilentDrive is not for you and it's time to send it back to QuietPC for a refund.

STAGE THREE
Upgrading your processor fan

FIG 3A In this case, we're upgrading an old SECC2 (Slot 1) Intel Pentium III processor. This comes with an integrated fan assembly which needs removing. QuietPC publishes excellent step-by-step instructions on its website for this process. Firstly, you remove the supports and then lift the processor and fan from its slot. Place a case screw on a flat surface, marry its tip with one of the four holes that house the fan attachment heads and literally 'punch out' the old fan mounts. The new fan is then placed on the processor assembly using the conductive pad supplied (or your own paste) and the new metal clip fixes the fan/heatsink firmly in place.

FIG 3B Once you've attached the new fan, it's time to return the processor and fan assembly to the slot on the motherboard. You may well need to clear out the old plastic processor support fittings that were there for the old assembly. Simply lower the whole shebang into the motherboard slot – the right way round of course. Don't forget to connect the processor fan power lead to the motherboard, otherwise you'll be smelling the unmistakable odour of fried chips. The whole process is simpler for flat pin grid array processors such as socket Athlons, Durons, Celerons and Pentium IIIs, though the fan can be a pain to clip in.

STAGE FOUR
A new case fan

FIG 4 It may be that your PC doesn't have a separate case fan, in which case you needn't worry about this step. However, it could be worth getting one anyway if you've got a case packed with expansion cards and multiple CDR/DVD drives. These either come with a three-pin fitting for attachment to the motherboard itself, or a fat four-pin jobbie for a proper drive power-lead straight from the PSU. Either way, it's best to mount it at the front of your case so air is drawn across the motherboard. Make sure that if your PSU blows air, the case fan should suck, and vice-versa. Before mounting it, connect the power and watch the fan to determine which way round it should go. Most decent cases have a front mounting point that doesn't even need screws. You simply connect the fan to a plastic assembly that clips into the case. PCZ

A QUIET BUY

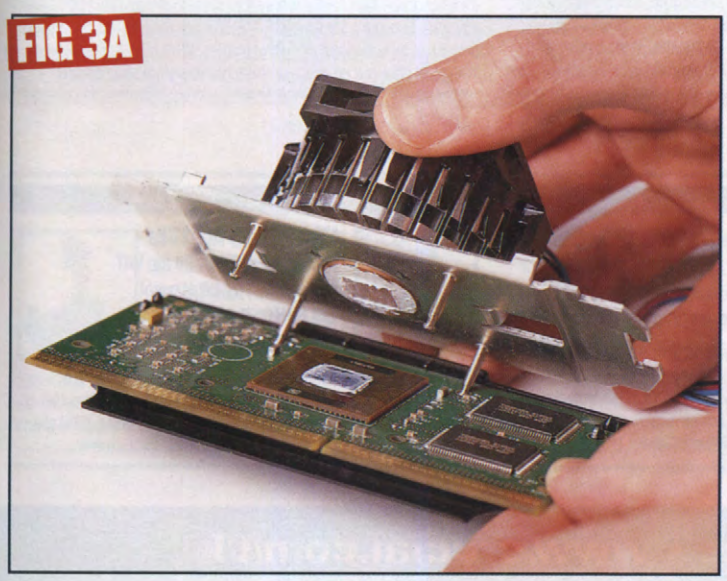
"I'd like to thank my ma, my pa and the boys at QuietPC"

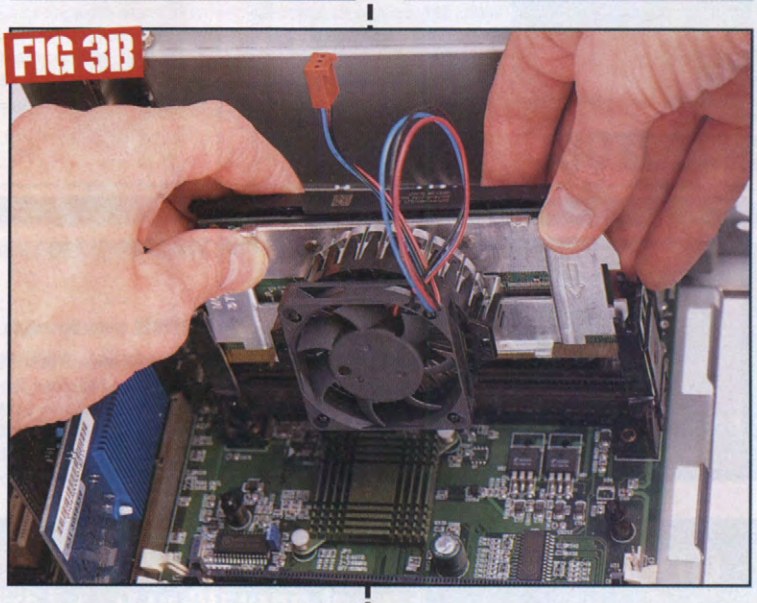
A big 'ta very much' goes to Glenn at QuietPC.com (0870 321 4620) who helped us out with the bits for this feature. It's a UK-based company and has all the info you need to decide which bits to buy on the website. This is what we used for the feature (all prices include VAT):

Radial Fin Cooler (Intel SECC2)	**£23.50**
SilentDrive Acoustic Enclosure	**£24.67**
ATX Ultra-Quiet PSU 300W (AMD Approved)	**£63.45**
Ultra-Quiet 80mm Case Fan, 3 pin connector	**£16.45**

The Flower CPU Cooler kit in the boxout rocks in at £41.13 all in, while the Video Card Heatsink kit will set you back £29.38.

If this all sounds a bit pricey, consider that if you're upgrading from an old Pentium III to an Athlon, you'll need to shell out on a 300W PSU: the cheapest we found from a reputable online supplier was only £15 cheaper than the ultra-quiet version and most cost just a fiver less. Noisy case fans are selling for around £12 online, just a few quid less than these quiet ones. And your average processor fan is also just a tenner cheaper. Consider the difference it makes in the corner of your lounge when you're watching a DVD... You choose...





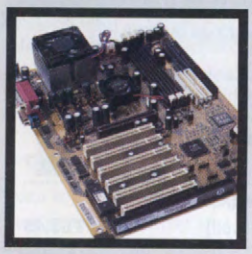
crucial TECHNOLOGY A Division of Micron
The Memory Experts™

BUYER'S GUIDE

Are you looking to upgrade your PC? Since we've started this Buyer's Guide, prices have dropped consistently every month, and if you're looking for a bit of extra zip, you can get it for a lot less than you might have thought. Memory is dirt cheap as well – if you're still labouring with less than 128Mb RAM buy some now

MOTHERBOARD

BEST BUY



ABIT KT-7A RAID
STREET PRICE £123 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER Abit
TELEPHONE 01438 741999 **WEBSITE** www.abit.nl/english

It won't be long before we see motherboards featuring the new Via KT266A chipset hitting the market. Until then, stick with the KT7A-RAID from Abit – the old VIA KT133A chipset teamed with PC133 memory is by far your best bet for a fuller flava at present. We like the Abit motherboard for its ATA-100 and RAID drive support and overclocking potential. Although the motherboard only ostensibly supports up to 1.2GHz Athlons, with the latest BIOS KT73R and later motherboard revisions you can fit processors up to 1.4GHz if its L1 bridges are disconnected.

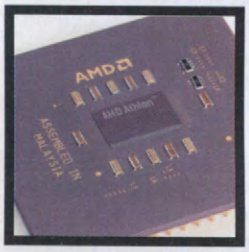
BEST BUDGET

GIGABYTE GA-7ZXR REV 3
STREET PRICE £92 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER Gigabyte
TELEPHONE 01908 362700
WEBSITE www.gbt-tech.co.uk

The GA-7ZXR is similar to the ABIT KT-7A-RAID, taking Socket A Athlon processors to 1.4GHz and offering support for up to 4 ATA-100 RAID and 4 ATA-100 IDE devices. It even has four-channel audio on board courtesy of the Creative Labs CT5880 PCI chipset.

PROCESSOR

BEST BUY

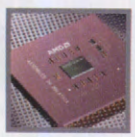


AMD 1.4GHZ ATHLON
STREET PRICE £112
MANUFACTURER AMD
TELEPHONE 01276 803100 **WEBSITE** www.amd.com

~~£147~~ £112

You can now buy a 1.4GHz Socket A Athlon for the miserly sum of £112, from Dabs.com in the UK. Athlon is still clearly the processor of choice for the gamer, at least until there's good reason to buy multi-processor motherboard/CPU combos for gaming. The 1.4GHz Athlon is a screamer, and unbelievably cheap for the performance it offers. As Athlons over 1GHz are only available only in Socket A configuration, make sure you've got the right motherboard. Bear in mind that you'll need to fit a hefty fan to keep the beast cool, and that it should fit properly.

BEST BUDGET



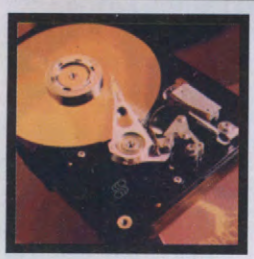
AMD 800MHZ DURON
STREET PRICE £41 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER AMD
TELEPHONE 01276 803100
WEBSITE www.amd.com

~~£43~~ £41

Durons are basically Athlons with smaller Level 2 (L2) processor caches. This still compares favourably with Intel's ageing Celeron chip cache structure. Besides, Duron still has the blistering Floating Point Unit (FPU) mathematical calculation speed, making it a top processor for gamers.

HARD DRIVE

NEW ENTRY



SEAGATE BARRACUDA ATA IV 60GB
STREET PRICE £141 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER Seagate
TELEPHONE 01628 890 366 **WEBSITE** www.seagate.com

We have a new Best Buy hard drive – the 60Gb Seagate Barracuda ATA IV. The IBM Deskstar 75GXP drives are looking a bit long in the tooth alongside this modern beastie. Although it's a 7,200 RPM drive, it runs both cooler and quieter than its peers. Fully loaded with a 2Mb cache, the performance is solid across the board, both in terms of average seek times and sustained data throughput. We recommend the 60Gb drive on the basis that it seems pretty good value for money, though the range also offers 20, 40 and 80Gb variants.

BEST BUDGET

SEAGATE U SERIES 5 20Gb
STREET PRICE £66 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER Seagate
TELEPHONE 01628 890366
WEBSITE www.seagate.com

It's tough these days finding a drive that doesn't offer an ATA-100 interface. Seagate's fabulous ATA-100 U Series 5 drives redefine budget performance, featuring 5,400 RPM platters with a sub-9ms seek time. The 20Gb drive is a good compromise between price and capacity.

MONITOR

BEST BUY

IIYAMA VISION MASTER PRO 510 22in
STREET PRICE £628
MANUFACTURER iiyama
TELEPHONE 01438 745482 **WEBSITE** www.iiyama.co.uk

I've been a devotee of iiyama products for years – both my monitors at home are iiyamas, both are comparatively old, yet as good as new. The Vision Master Pro 510 has a stunning 22in screen. The tube is a Mitsubishi Diamondtron NF (Natural Flat), arguably the best-performing flat-screen CRT for the money currently available. Of all the large-screen monitors we've come across, it's the best all-rounder, with a tight focus right to the screen corners and fabulous colour purity. It also features iiyama's own Anti-Glare coating, and a maximum resolution of 2048 x 1536.

BEST BUDGET

HANSOL 710P 17in
STREET PRICE £160 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER Hansol
TELEPHONE 01252 360400
WEBSITE www.hansol-uk.com

For the budget-conscious gamer in need of a monitor, Hansol is a company well worth a look. With a fabulously low price, it will handle 1024 x 768 with a vertical refresh rate of 85Hz, and 1600 x 1200 at a creditable 75Hz. There's not a lot that'll touch this for the money.

crucial TECHNOLOGY A Division of Micron
The Memory Experts™ • www.crucial.com/uk
Freephone: 0800 013 7396

GRAPHICS CARD

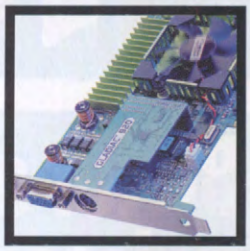
BEST BUDGET

VIDEOLOGIC VIVID!XS 32MB
STREET PRICE £92 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER VideoLogic
TELEPHONE 01923 277488
WEBSITE www.videologic.com

The new Kyro II chipset blows its slower Kyro brethren to smithereens at 175MHz clockspeed as opposed to 115MHz. The 32Mb Vivid!XS replaces the Hercules 3D Prophet 4500 as Best Budget Buy – but only just, there's barely anything to choose between the two.

BEST BUY

ELSA GLADIAC 920
STREET PRICE £286 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER Elsa
TELEPHONE 0800 056 3445 **WEBSITE** www.elsa.de/international/uk/index.htm



The card that's been Best Buy for the last four months is now available to buy, and with the new NVIDIA drivers, it kicks ass. The 32-bit colour performance is cool, the FSAA is blinding, and it's got all the nifty DX8 features you could want. We love it, and its price has dropped again from the ridiculously high RRP. It's the first card to support the sexier features of DirectX 8.0. Elsa's Gladiac features an S-Video socket for output to TV – a hell of a lot more useful than you'd think and comes with a full, specially enhanced version of *Giants: Citizen Kabuto.*

SOUNDCARD

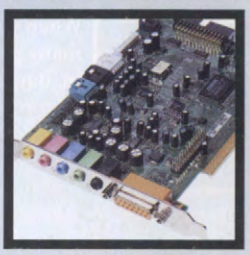
BEST BUDGET

HERCULES GAMESURROUND FORTISSIMO II
STREET PRICE £36 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER Hercules
PHONE (020) 8686 5600
WEBSITE www.hercules-uk.com

This four-channel audio card represents excellent value for money and its DirectSound 3D support is gib-tastic. You can even get four channels of surround sound from your DVD movies with a special version of PowerDVD!

BEST BUY

VIDEOLOGIC SONICFURY
STREET PRICE £62 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER VideoLogic
TELEPHONE 01923 277488 **WEBSITE** www.videologic.com



VideoLogic's SonicFury was the first soundcard to utilise the super-efficient Crystal CS4630 chipset, and is still the best value for money. The chipset, known as SoundFusion, is a multi-purpose Digital Signal Processor (DSP) that can be reprogrammed in software depending on the function it's being used to accelerate. It can give hardware support for up to 52 streams of DirectSound 3D audio, more than enough for today's crop of games. If you hunt around, you can also find an OEM version of the card on sale with no software bundle – a bargain at under £60.

HEADPHONES

BEST BUDGET

MICROSOFT GAMEVOICE USB
STREET PRICE £49.99 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER Microsoft
TELEPHONE 0870 601 0100 **WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/sidewinder/

So how can a set of budget headphones cost more than our current Best Buy? It's simple really – the GameVoice enables you to talk to your mates over the Internet. It works very well, and as they double as a more than decent set of headphones, they're a bit of a bargain.

BEST BUY

SENNHEISER HD 200 MASTER
STREET PRICE £45
MANUFACTURER Sennheiser
TELEPHONE 01494 551 551 **WEBSITE** www.sennheiser.co.uk

This German audio company has been around for more than 50 years, founded by the suitably Teutonic-sounding Dr Fritz Sennheiser. The HD200s are actually targeted at DJs, and for good reason. They're very, very loud. They're very, very strong. They have a closed back design, meaning you can hear nearby rocket jumpers comfortably while her indoors has *EastEnders* turned up high enough so she can hear it from the kitchen. And, crucially for extended gaming sessions, they're comfortable and light, weighing around 140g. A great pair of cans at a top price.

CDRW DRIVES

BEST BUDGET

TEAC CDW58EK 8X8X32
STREET PRICE £72 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER Teac
TELEPHONE 01923 225235
WEBSITE www.teac.co.uk

I've just had to buy a load of CD/RW drives and these Teac drives were dead cheap, easy to install and have worked without a hitch. Bearing in mind my first CD-RW drive cost me well over £250 and was flaky and slow, these babies are a good deal. Shop around and you're laughing…

BEST BUY

PLEXTOR 16/10/40A
STREET PRICE £115 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER Plextor
TELEPHONE +32 2 725 5522 **WEBSITE** www.plextor.com

We've been running Plextor CDs, DVDs and CD-Rs for years in our machines and they're a) bulletproof and b) fast as anything you'll get within a few quid of the asking price. This is a brand new drive that is dead fast, offers Sanyo Burnproof technology and is competitively priced alongside some good contenders from Yamaha and Mirai. It comes with WinOnCD (nowhere near as good as Nero but proven) and offers CD-R, CD-RW and fast CD-Read performance. I'd upgrade, but my ancient SCSI 6x Plextor CD-R still cuts the mustard – three years on…

JOYSTICKS

BEST BUDGET

SAITEK CYBORG 3D GOLD
STREET PRICE £45
MANUFACTURER Saitek
TELEPHONE 01454 451900
WEBSITE www.saitek.co.uk

Saitek's current generation of sticks are fabulous. The Cyborg Gold is a top-line USB stick that excels across the board. The design is superb, both strong and adjustable – even lefties are catered for – and its response and accuracy are unequalled, even among more pricey competition.

BEST BUY

MICROSOFT SIDEWINDER FORCEFEEDBACK 2
STREET PRICE £62 inc VAT
MANUFACTURER Microsoft
TELEPHONE 0870 601 0100
WEBSITE www.microsoft.com/products/hardware/sidewinder/sidewinder.htm

Force-feedback products aren't everyone's cup of tea, but nothing comes close to the SideWinder FF2. It's a huge, heavy tabletop affair, with the power transformer built into the base. An infrared sensor causes the stick to leap to attention when you grasp it. The force-feedback routines work extremely well – mainly because the motors are so powerful. If more games made better use of the technology, it would be a must-have piece of gear.

The Memory Experts™ • www.crucial.com/uk
Freephone: 0800 013 7396
crucial TECHNOLOGY A Division of Micron

ENDZONE

Bitter and twisted

ENDZONE EDITOR Rhianna Pratchett

When you play so many games day in, day out, it's all too easy to become a jaded reviewer. So, it's reassuring to have a few games that you would catapult yourself across three desks at the mere mention of. For me it's *Thief, Diablo* and a host of other titles that usually get dubbed 'beardy' by the rest of my freshly shaved, baby-faced team. But in their own ways they are just as bad. Anthony is an expert at anything involving young Japanese girls, while Richie sits with a daft dreamy smile on his face whenever *Star Wars Galaxies* or anything 'retro' is mentioned. We'll just have to wait and see whether the delivery of his new baby brings the world its first 'Darth Shoemaker.'

I'm in my element this month as Tony Lamb has dug up some superb *Thief II* fan missions for Extended Play on page 142. I've been a fan of the *Thief* games since long before I ever posed with a bow and arrow for the sneak 'em ups Supertest (a rare moment when someone actually put me in charge of a sharp instrument).

If you're into anything a bit spacey you'll want to take a look at Martin's interview on page 132 with Eric Peterson, who helped develop the genre from *Wing Commander* to *Conquest: Frontier Wars*. Or check out 1987 in this month's Retro Zone. Back then, I was still wearing Alice bands and clutching my Adam And The Ants pencil case. Find out what others were up to on page 136.

YOUR HOSTS

Adam Phillips

Phil Wand

CHEATMASTE

Turning you to the dark side

EVIL INCARNATE Rhianna Pratchett

NEED HELP?

If your problems persist, all you need to do to solve them is...

WRITE TO Dear Rhianna/Cheat Master, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with Dear Rhianna or Cheat Master in the subject line

DIABLO II: LORD OF DESTRUCTION

Vivendi

CHEATING BAAL

Open a town portal when you get into Baal's World Stone Chamber. If you die use the Waypoint to go to any other location and then immediately come back. Go down the town portal and Baal's chamber will have re-set itself – minus any tentacles and doppelgängers Baal may have summoned previously.

MULE CHARACTERS

A great way to store stuff for trading and for transferring between characters is to create mule characters who are there purely for holding stuff. To transfer items between your characters create a game and password it, setting the level difference to 99 so that any of your characters (low or high level) can get in. Then go in with one character and keep the game open for about four or five minutes. After that you can exit and the server will keep the game open for about three minutes, even if no one is in there. You can now go in with characters and drop stuff, and then pick it up with other characters. Incredibly useful.

MAKING ACT ONE A BREEZE

Use one of your higher level characters to find a five or six-socketed low-level bow such as a composite one, and socket it with five or six perfect emeralds. This will give you damage of more than 500. Create your new character and complete the second quest which will get you a Rogue merc, and equip her with the bow. As she's a higher level than you, she'll get a lot more damage and you'll rip through the first Act.

THE SIMS

Electronic Arts

While in the game press Ctrl + Shift + Alt c to bring up cheat mode, then type:

klapaucious	$1,000 Simoleons
rosebud	$1,000 Simoleons (for 1.1 or Livin' Large)
set_hour #	Set the 24-hour clock
autonomy #	Change your character's independent thought from 1-100
sim_speed #	Change game speed from -1000 to +1000
map_edit on/off	Edit the map
edit_char	Open the Create A Character screen
grow_grass	Grow grass # (1-150)
move_object	Move any object/person
Rotation (0-3)	Rotate camera
!	Repeat last cheat
;	Separates multiple-cheat commands

Cheat your way to a *Sim* dream house.

Get money fast by going into cheat mode and entering "klapaucious" or "rosebud". Then bring up the cheat mode again and type "!;!;!;!;!" (up to 60) for multiple money boosts.

TOP TIP: HALVING THE BILLS

Here's a way of getting rid of some of those bills. Wait until the postman brings the next set of bills, pay the old ones and then take them out to the mailbox. When you put them in the newer ones disappear.

ALIEN VERSUS PREDATOR GOLD

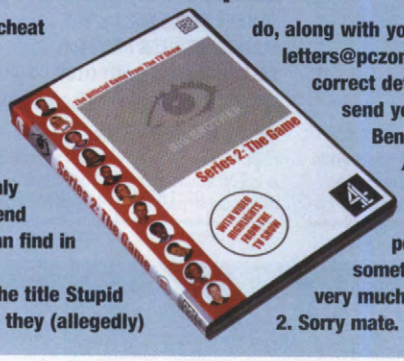
Vivendi

Type "avp.exe -debug" in the command line parameter. Press '~' to bring up the console screen.

STUPID COMPETITION

Where cheating and pointlessness are qualities to be admired

So you fancy yourself as a bit of a cheat master do you? Well, here's your chance to prove it by entering our Stupid Compo. All you have to do to enter is send us your most pointless cheats. If we think your cheat is stupid enough, we'll not only print it and your name, we'll also send you the most ridiculous prize we can find in the *PC ZONE* prize cupboard.



Please send your cheats, with the title Stupid Compo, a brief description of what they (allegedly) do, along with your name and address, to letters@pczone.co.uk. Make sure you include all your correct details, so if you win we know where to send your special prize. This month's winner is Ben Gillies from Solihull with his cheat for *Age Of Empires*. While in the game click on a catapult, press Enter then type 'jack be nimble' and your catapults will fire peasants and cows. Got to be worth something that one, though in this case, not very much. Ben wins this copy of *Big Brother: Series 2*. Sorry mate.

DEAR WANDY
Lost and confused? Let Wandy show you the way
P.122

TALKING HEADS
Eric Peterson talks games, movies and the future of the industry
P.132

RETROZONE
What were you up to in January 1987? Another trip down memory lane
P.136

EXTENDED PLAY
Check out a whole load of maps and mods for *Thief II* and *Earth 2150*
P.142

GOD God mode
GIVEALLWEAPONS Get all weapons
LIGHT Brightens area
TIMESCALE # Adjust game speed (# = 0.00 and 1.00)
PRADOBOT # Create Predator-Alien bot (# = no.)
MARINEBOT Create Marine Bot (# = no.)
PREDALIENBOT Create CPU-controlled Predator-Alien
PRAETORIANBOT Create CPU-controlled Praetorian bot
XENOBORG Create CPU-controlled Xenoborg

Alien
CROUCHMODE 0/1 Crouch on/off

Predator
GIMME_CHARGE Recharges energy supply

Marine
MOTIONTRACKERVOLUME # Change MT volume (# = 0.00-1.00)
MOTIONTRACKERSPPED # Change MT speed (# = 1-16)

GUNMAN CHRONICLES
Vivendi
Type -dev -console -game rewolf in the command line parameter. Press ` to bring up the console screen.

/god God mode
/impulse 101 All weapons and ammo
/notarget Invisibility
/noclip No clipping mode

SYSTEM SHOCK 2
In the game press shift + ; then...

Summon_obj medical kit Get med kit
Summon_obj psi amp Get psi amp
Summon_obj wrench Get wrench
Summon_obj pistol Get pistol
Summon_obj shotgun Get shotgun
Summon_obj assault rifle Get assault rifle
Summon_obj laser pistol Get laser pistol
Summon_obj ap clip Get ap clip
Summon_obj he clip Get he clip
Summon_obj standard clip Get standard clip
Summon_obj detox patch Get detox patch
Summon_obj psi booster Get psi booster
Summon_obj EMP Rifle Get EMP rifle
Summon_obj Electro Shock Get Electro shock rifle
Summon_obj Gren Launcher Get grenade launcher
Psi_full Getfull Psi points
Add_pool Get build-pool points
Ubermensch Turn into homo superior
Cycle_ammo Cycle ammo

Do not feed the animals in *Gunman Chronicles*.

DEAR RHIANNA

Rhianna Pratchett bandages your gaming wounds

LOST IN THE DARK
Q I've just started playing as Aline in *Alone in the Dark 4* and I have no idea how to get past the shadow creatures – all I seem to be able to do is use the torchlight to scare them off. I don't know how to get out or what to do or where to go. Please help!

Andrew Harding

A **You need to find the key to the door opposite the one you came out of after talking to Mrs Morton. To get the key, go to the junction, turn left and take the right door. In the room with two doors, go through the right one and up the corridor. In the room at the end you'll find the key on a table. Retrace your steps to get back to the locked door. Keep using your torch all the time to scare off the shadows.**

HIRING THE A-TEAM
Q I am totally stuck on the first level of *Heist*. I cannot get the $4,000 to hire the two team-mates. I have tried everything but anywhere I heist the alarm goes off. Please help!

Jon Vaughan

A **The alarms don't always go off, so you have to be patient as you probably won't be lucky enough to get through it first time. After the initial phone call go and buy a shotgun and steal the medikits from the pharmacy, then sell them off and buy some lockpicks. Hire the veteran, rob the trailers and the bank – then you'll have plenty of money to hire the second member of your team. Fill up your pockets with all the tools and weapons you can, then go and catch the bus.**

SET PHASERS TO STUN
Q I'm having problems killing the final boss in *Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force*. When I reach the point of 200 degrees it takes about three minutes to load up when I die. And I must have died about 20 times before I gave up! Not only this but I unloaded a whole load of federation ammo using the photon launcher into him and *he didn't die*! Please tell me how I can send him to a Malon toiletry facility (if you watch *Star Trek*, you'll understand).

HamletJnr

A **It sounds like you're doing all the right things – this guy is hard to take down and he can take a hell of a lot of ammo before keeling over. After the Etherians have helped you destroy the seeds, the Vohrsoth leader will come out from behind his force field. Keep dodging and weaving, destroying any leftover seeds and blasting him with the secondary fire of the tetryon pulse disruptor. Then try using plasma bursts or the dreadnought. Keep circling and using the health and weapons terminals and you should get somewhere, though remember that his body doesn't show damage. Tricky huh?**

Skull trouble in Planescape: Torment.

TORMENTED
Q I'm stuck on *Planescape: Torment* and it's driving me crazy. Once Morte gets stolen by Lothar he tells me to go and get him a skull. So I go and get him a skull but if I talk to him once I've gotten a skull, no matter what I say, as soon as I've finished speaking to him a little message comes up and tells me that I've trusted my immortality with the wrong person and then I am destroyed.

Stephen Parker

A **Make sure you have a superior skull to give him, not just any old one. Soego's would be ideal, but the skulls of The Silent King, Mantock, Stale Mary, Hargrimm and Acaste also work. Give him the superior skull to get the experience points and then he should be more talkative.**

WATCHDOG

The software industry can be a closed shop when it comes to punters and their complaints. Let *PC ZONE* ramraid their premises and snatch some answers

GETTING RESPECT Adam Phillips

LIVING IN A WORLD O' HURT?

We're here to help. If you have a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line.

WRITE TO Watchdog, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1P 5FF

EMAIL Alternatively, email us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk **with the subject heading Watchdog**

BT ADSL HELL!

Q I read your article on ADSL in the last issue with great interest. According to BT's figures, six out of ten homes can now have ADSL. Point your browser to www.adslguide.org.uk and you will see a different story. I have now attempted to get both ADSL and RADSL twice on two separate lines but have failed.

I live on the outskirts of Manchester and am 3.7km from my local exchange. So, in theory, I'm just short of the ADSL requirements but getting RADSL should be no problem. Ha! In my dreams! I failed the whoosh tests on both lines when it came to an RADSL installation. Why?

According to four different BT engineers, because 60 per cent of the cabling BT use is aluminium instead of copper. What will BT do about it? Nothing – why should they help get me onto broadband? I'm not cost-effective, even though I pay my phone bill like the next person.

I am now just looking for some way to get my voice heard. When are BT going to help the people who are unable to get ADSL and RADSL? Will they ever do the required work to connect a potential customer, or are they going to leave the UK lagging behind in broadband just because it isn't cost-effective?

Matt2K

A Ho-hum, another complaint about BT and broadband. The rollout hasn't exactly been smooth according to some of our readers, so what consolation can BT offer Matt? "By the end of September 2001, 13 million homes will be in broadband DSL-enabled areas," reckons the corporation. "This is 60 per cent of UK homes. However, ADSL is a distance-dependant technology and even with rate adaptation, not everyone will be able to receive service."

BT claim that it is investigating the use of other broadband technologies in areas where ADSL cannot reach: "BT's network does contain a small percentage of aluminium, although this has not been deployed in the network for a number of years," explains BT. "The presence of aluminium in the network is not an impediment to DSL – it slightly alters the transmission characteristics of the telephone line."

Righto! But what about Matt and his struggle to join the next generation in Net technology? "We are sorry to hear that you are unable to receive the broadband service of your choice, but suggest that you continue to look out for new developments that may help your case in the future."

Oh. Well, there you go mate. God bless BT, eh?

BT Broadband: they say they are rolling it out wherever possible – cold comfort for those who are still left broadband-less like Matt...

CARRERA CRASH

Q I would like to warn your readers about the danger of ordering a PC from Carrera SSC. After waiting 12 days for it to become available, I received my PC on June 29. Carrera claim that they test all their new PCs before sending them out. If this is true

THRUST AND PARRY!

Speak to me...

Q Having spent several years praising Thrustmaster for their excellent products and service, I am sorry to say I am no longer of this opinion. In the last six months, I have had two major problems, neither of which have been resolved by Thrustmaster.

The first problem? I upgraded my computer by switching to an Athlon-based machine. So that meant a new case, motherboard and RAM were purchased. The problems started almost immediately when my Force GT Wheel refused to work.

Reader Jason though is ready for a showdown with the company...

I tried their website and used the email form provided. Nothing came back apart from the bog standard acknowledgement email. I waited and waited and waited. Still nothing, so I made a phone call to their helpline. Loads of suggestions were made – none of which actually worked. I eventually solved the problem myself!

The second problem was when I was playing *Colin McRae 2* the other week. There was an almighty cracking sound and this was followed by the loss of force feedback to the wheel. I guess that the shaft has snapped from the force feedback device inside the case. The wheel still turns but there's no feeling of linkage between the wheel and the rest of the device. So I sent an email asking whether it was worth having it fixed (it's out of warranty after all), and if so, how much it would cost to do so. I also asked if I should just junk it and buy a new wheel.

Surprise, surprise – not a single reply has come back and I'm stuck with a broken wheel which I don't mind replacing if I have to – but it won't be with a Thrustmaster one this time. I'm disappointed with the lack of support from a company who build some of the best gaming devices around.

Jason Wakeling

A Hmm... a breakdown in communication or are the makers of Thrustmaster getting a tad complacent? We approached them and they had the following to say: "We have checked on our mail system and can only find a single email from Jason Wakeling dated January 13 2001 which mentions the problem with the wheel losing connectivity," offers a spokesperson for the company. "Unfortunately, the email address was incomplete so we were unable to respond. There was, however, an email form from him in September 2000 which mentions the problem regarding the SB Live card to which we did reply with the solution."

They say that the major problem is that your product is in its third year and has not been available since they took over the Thrustmaster brand. They continue: "As a result we have very little information on this product. We do, however, value our customers and try and assist wherever possible – even with our oldest products, such as the Thrustmaster T2, which is over nine years old."

They say that if you drop them a line at their technical support department on 020 7216 0047 and speak to Willem, they will do all they can to try and solve your broken wheel problem.

Thrustmaster are known for their quality products. But they still sometimes break.

then they must have hired a few chimps to do this as my PC crashed after every five minutes of starting Windows – plus it didn't come with the soundcard driver! After spending an hour trying to get through, they told me they would send someone to pick up my PC. This would mean about a four-day wait for its repair and they would send the disc first class.

Three days later and no disc. So I rang them up – again I got through after a long wait – and I asked them about the disc. They said sorry: "I'll send you a disc first class!"

Two days later and there was still no disc. This time they said they'd send it with my PC. Two days later, my PC arrived with a copied version of my drivers. I opened the box to find the PC with scratches down one side, and the DVD drive and CDR knocked out of place. And something banging around inside!

I opened up the PC to see what the problem was only to find that the CPU heat sink was loose due to the motherboard's brackets being snapped off. Again I rang Carrera. They blamed the damage on the delivery company (though how could they have scratched it when it was in a box?). They went on to say that they would pick the PC up the next morning (Wednesday 18 July) and that they would send a new one on Friday. Wednesday morning arrived and no one came. I rang them up again and was told: "Sorry, I completely forgot about it. I'll send someone to pick it up and the new one will come on Monday."

The old PC got picked up but no new PC came on Monday – I spent another two hours waiting to be rung back because the man who was dealing with my case was never there. My new PC came but then it didn't work with games properly.

After ringing them up and spending three days downloading new drivers, I gave up and asked for a full refund. I was told this was not possible and the cost of a refund was 20 per cent. Also, they said that there was no way of getting a full refund because it was a software problem – even though my friend also has an Athlon 1200 and a Geforce2 MX and he has no problems.

I was willing to put the first few of these problems down to bad luck, but now I believe it cannot be anything but the result of extremely bad service. So now I'm either stuck with a PC which doesn't work very well or a £200 bill for the ride. I urge your readers not to go anywhere near Carrera.

Mr O'Connor

Mr O'Conner got his PC back battered and bruised because of the courier…

"Now I'm either stuck with a PC which doesn't work very well or a £200 bill for the ride"

MR O'CONNOR, ON CARRERA'S RUBBISH SERVICE

A Blimey! Sounds like a nightmare situation. Games not working, PCs being knackered en route to your home. What is going on? We asked Carrera: "The customer called originally complaining that the machine was hanging in a certain game but did not hang in any other applications," says a spokesperson for the PC maker. "We spent a lot of time on support with the customer looking for a specific driver for the game. The customer insisted that the problem was a hardware problem. As we were pretty sure the problem was software-related, we arranged for the machine to come back."

They claim that once they had had a chance to check out the machine, they found there was no problem with it. So after fully testing the PC, they returned the computer. This was when the courier disgracefully managed to damage your machine. Once Carrera heard about this, they arranged for a new machine to be shipped.

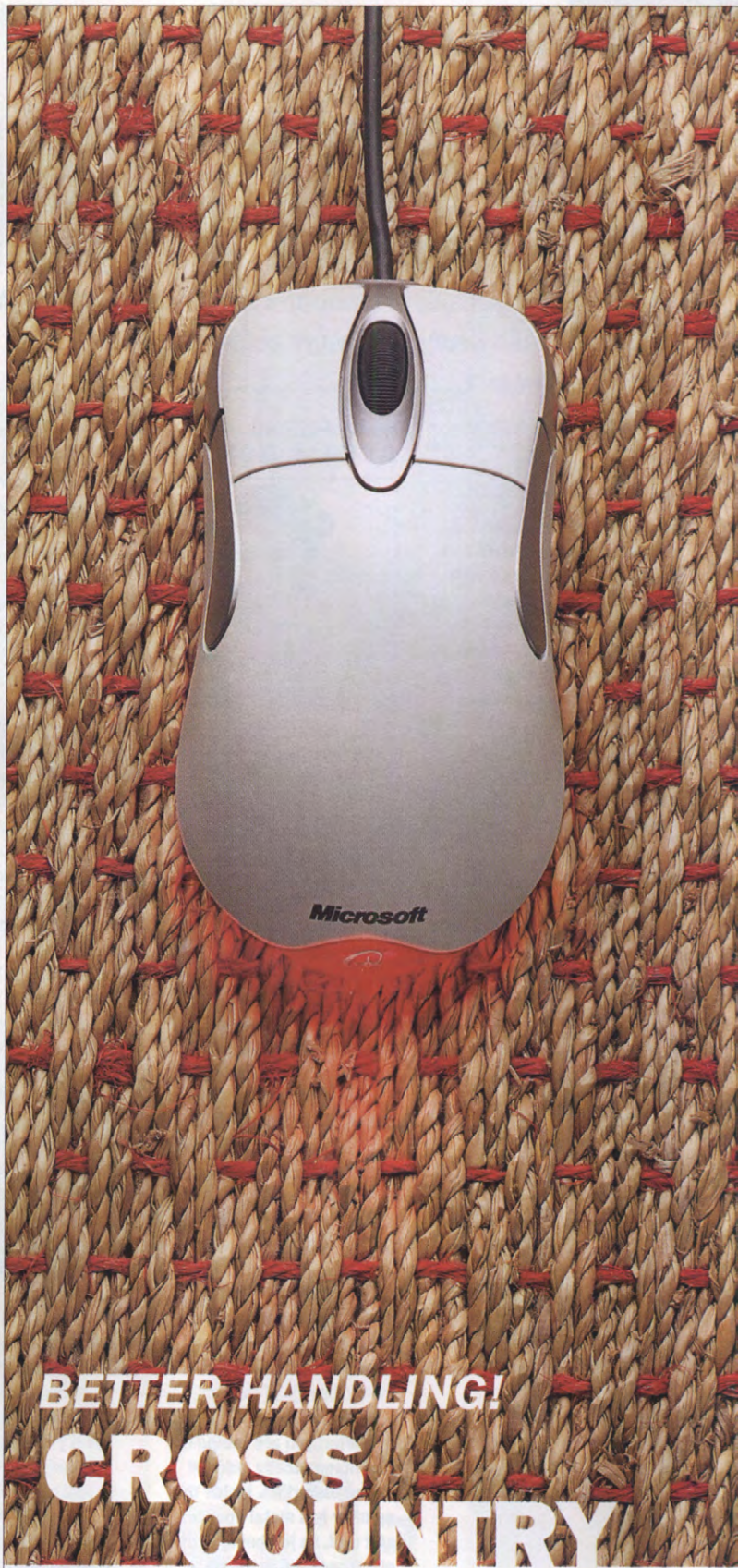
"We shipped a completely new machine and on receipt the customer complained that the machine was hanging again with one game," continues Carrera. "We explained that because there was no problem with the machine itself but with one application, he should contact the software vendor about it. We would obviously try and help but not knowing the technical ins and outs of the game, the software vendor would be better able to assist."

They say that they explained to you that if there was a hardware fault then they would refund, "but in this case, there obviously wasn't. The customer then stated that he had seen a reduction in prices and was looking at a different specification. We do not believe there is any fault with the machine and will try and help at all times. The problem in this case has been that the only driver we can obtain for this particular game is in German. We have requested the UK version and will forward it as soon as we are in receipt."

They round off by saying that they really are trying to help you get the best from your machine. Keep us informed…

READ ME

If you are writing in to complain about a product, please supply us with your full name, address and contact number. With PCs, make sure that you also include all purchasing details such as reference and invoice numbers. It means that we can resolve your problems much quicker.



If you're going off the beaten track, Microsoft® IntelliMouse® Optical will give you an easy, comfortable ride on practically any surface. Now supercharged with the latest IntelliEye™ optical technology, it scans the surface up to 6,000 times a second to give you even more reliable and accurate steering plus new accelerated scrolling. There's no mouse ball to service, and there are five programmable buttons for storing your favourite routes. Available in right and left hand drive.

For more information visit

www.drive-me-wild.co.uk

© 2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, the Microsoft logo, IntelliEye, and IntelliMouse are trademarks or registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the US and/or other countries.

Microsoft®

DEAR WANDY

Another bulging sack of computer wretchedness. Can Wandy wave his magic stick and make everyone happy before bedtime?

HOCUS POCUS Phil Wand

GOT A QUERY, DEARIE?

Send us a query or a top tip and you could pocket £50.

Share your techie or gaming-related problems with us, and we, in turn, may well share it with thousands of readers via these very pages in a big communal love-in-type-thing. And as an extra incentive, we're offering a cool £50 to the reader who sends in the most interesting query or toppest tip every month. No, really. Send as much relevant information as you can.

WRITE TO Dear Wandy, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF

EMAIL Address your letters to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk **with the subject heading Dear Wandy**

Please note: while we can assure you that we read every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone. Thanks.

MAGNETIC ATTRACTION

Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777-1855), renowned inventor of the degauss button.

Q I'm currently suffering an annoying display problem. A while ago, I noticed a weird haze discolouring the sides of the screen. This seems to happen when I start up my computer, but not all the time. After puzzling over it, I noticed that degaussing would usually remove it. Now, a couple of months on, after a house move, I have the purple colour in the bottom right corner of the screen and the colours have sort of faded along the top of the screen. What's worrying me is the degauss trick is not working. The purple is there whenever my computer is on. What's most annoying, is the fact that my computer is only 18 months old, and I was told monitors should last a good five years. I have always used screensavers and tried to take good care of it.

MrMetalMonster

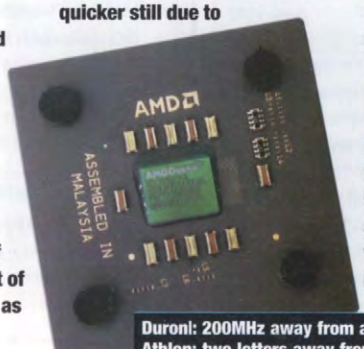
A What you are seeing is magnetically induced colour distortion. Inside the monitor is a metal aperture or slot grid, its job being to ensure electrons land in the right place on the glass. Red on the red phosphor, green on the green phosphor, and blue on the blue phosphor. Thing is, these electrons are deflected from their paths by a magnetic field, and any external fields will upset the balance. Put a speaker too near the screen and the electrons will veer all over the place, hitting the wrong places and causing swirls of mismatched colour. This sort of thing is inadvisable, though, as you can permanently magnetise the grid (although an old black and white TV has no such grid, and it's safe to stick magnets onto the front of the screen and warp people's faces if you're feeling bored), and from what you describe this seems to have happened to your monitor. Degaussing is designed specifically to clear this, although it may take several attempts, or perhaps several days depending how bad it is. Check you don't have any external magnetic sources that could be causing this – desktop speakers are notorious, although something like an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) can have the same effect if placed too close to the screen. Try moving your monitor away from all other equipment, and keep plugging at the degauss button.

WANT MORE GO

Q Would upgrading a Duron 800 to an Athlon 1.2 (or thereabouts) give me a significant boost or not? Also, my motherboard manual claims it supports up to 1.2GHz but would I be able to put a 1.4GHz on the same board?

Tim Dawkins

A It really depends what you wish to do with your machine. A Duron 800 might be AMD's entry level powerplant, but if you showed that to someone five years ago they would have nailed you to a post for witchery. In simple terms, it ain't slow, and may well sort you out nicely. That said, a 1.2GHz Athlon has half the grunt again by clock speed alone – and it's actually quicker still due to performance improvements in the chip's architecture. If you want to go higher to a 1.4GHz, you'll have to check for a BIOS update for your mobo, and see exactly what chips can be supported. Latest AMD Athlon chips use a 133MHz front-side bus (FSB), which is doubled to 266MHz internally, so unless your motherboard can support these speeds you'll have to look specifically for an earlier 100MHz chip.



Duroni: 200MHz away from an Athlon; two letters away from a well-known prophylactic.

COOLING: THE LAST WORD

Q I just read Bob Anderson's letter in issue 106. I had the same problem with the T-bird 750MHz system that I built. At first, I thought it was overheating too, so I bought some fans. No joy. I updated the PSU to 300W, but again nothing. I then formatted the hard drive and did a clean install, got the very latest set of drivers for my 3dfx Voodoo 4500 and still the troubles. I then thought back to exactly when the weird restarting problem first occurred. It was when I changed from a 3dfx Voodoo3 PCI to an AGP card. The only thing that was left to check, other than a hardware fault was the RAM. And would you believe it: success. After messing about checking the RAM, I found that one of the sticks didn't like working with the two new ones I'd bought. After I removed the offending SIMMs, no more unprompted restarts. Just a couple of questions: can I mix PC133 with PC100 RAM, and can I use an ATA100 drive as my board only supports ATA66. My board is a Gigabyte GA-7IXE4. What is the normal running temperature for an AMD Athlon, and do you know anything about peltier coolers – or should I leave it alone?

Paul

A You can mix PC100 and PC133 on most motherboards, but you will have to work as fast as the slowest cog and run everything as PC100. ATA100 drives will work quite happily on an ATA66 motherboard – they might even breath a sigh of relief at having to work at 66 per cent of their actual capacity. These days, it's worth buying ATA100, so when you get round to upgrading, the drive will then make the most of any ATA100-capable motherboard. As for running temperatures, that's a real can of worms, and one accounting for what seems like the majority of all Wandy correspondence of late. To summarise, AMD says the current T-bird will run to 90C safely. Not sure where they are measuring that temperature – my guess is the internal core, because by the time you measure the temperature on the outside of the ceramic package (plastic cartridge in your case), you really don't want to see anything above 60C or it'll start drooping on you. Personally, I try to keep below 50C outside under full load, and, of course, it all depends on how accurately your motherboard is monitoring it. Regarding peltiers: another can of worms. They can be good value coolers, but if you get your maths wrong when calculating the wattage, they will act more as an insulator than an extractor and fricassee your chip. Not to mention that a peltier – so called because it takes advantage of something called the Peltier Effect – often needs a lot of power, so that probably means a second power supply. So if all you're after is more speed, it's cheaper to buy a newer board and chip and work up from there. The later 1GHz T-birds will clock their socks off and prove no bother with little more than a heat-sink fan. Honest.

MOTHERBOARD BUILT FOR TWO

Q I would like to know if it's possible to buy a dual Socket A motherboard as I have searched on the Internet and only ever found dual Pentium (or Celeron) motherboards. If it is, then I require your expertise. I would like to get a dual Socket A

Dual Intel processors have been around for ages. What about AMD? asks Gareth Barnes

motherboard (with support for at least an 800MHz Duron), three 168 pin DIMM slots to support up to 1Gb of PC100 SDRAM, 4 x AGP, 5 x PCI Slots, PS/2 slots for keyboard and mouse, 1 x LPT, 2 x COM and 2 x IDE at UDMA 33. Also USB onboard connectors and ATX. I've had difficulty finding motherboards to suit my needs and have found no Dual Socket A motherboards. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

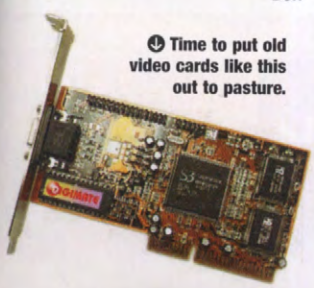
Gareth Barnes

A The answer is... some time soon. Maybe by the time you read this. AMD has already demonstrated a twin Athlon T-bird machine with their latest motherboard multiprocessor chipset, although, it has yet to find its way to the high street. Unfortunately, at the moment it looks as though you will need the multiprocessor AMD chip – the Athlon MP models – to use it. I'm sure that when it finally does see the light of day the rest of your requirements will be met, although, if you're going for performance might I recommend PC133 RAM and UDMA5/ATA 100 drives? The bad news is that these motherboards are normally used by megalomaniacs who will pay anything for power, and so AMD and Intel will quite happily price them appropriately. In short, you will pay through the nose for your multiprocessor privilege.

WOOF WOOF

Q Can you tell me why games on my computer are so incredibly slow? I'm running a 750MHz Duron with 64Mb and Windows 98 SE. Everything else runs just fine. My graphics card is an S3 Trio3D/2X with the latest drivers and DirectX 8.0. Despite all this, games run with a frame-rate of about 5fps. Something is obviously wrong. Is the Trio3D card pants? Would changing it solve my problems or is it something more fundamental?

Ben



Time to put old video cards like this out to pasture.

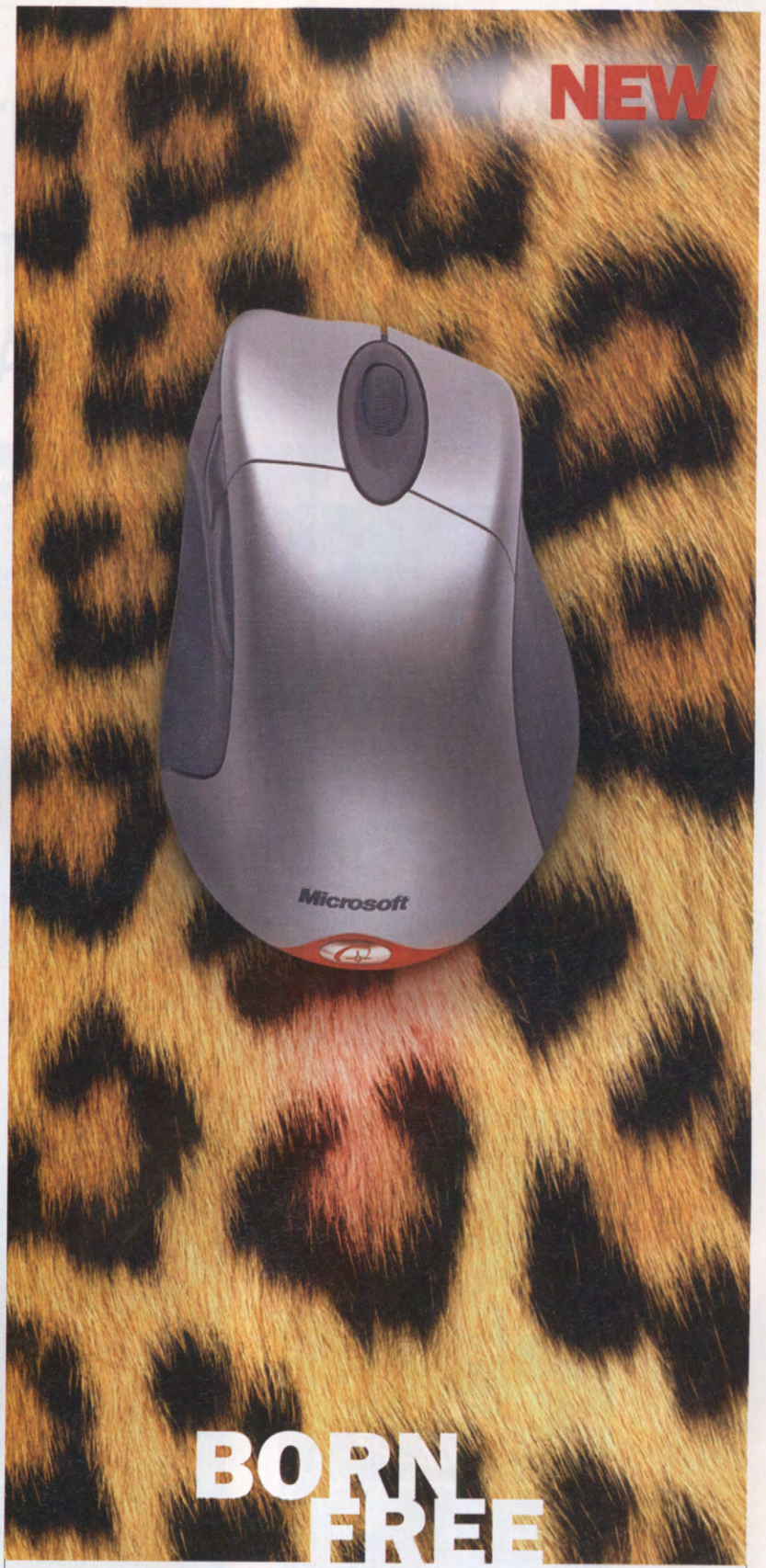
A The Trio3D is an old dog, and five frames per second is laughable. Buy yourself a GeForce2 or Kyro II card and then write back, telling me just how far your jaw dropped.

SCANDEATH

Q I have a major blue screen problem with my computer, and as far as I know it isn't because of overheating. I have an AMD Athlon 1GHz processor, 256Mb SDRAM, 32Mb TNT2, 40Gb hard drive and a Sound Blaster 128. I'm not sure of the processor's exact name; programs like SysID simply state that it's an Authentic AMD Athlon Processor. The problem is, 99 per cent of the time when I shut down my computer, normally after playing a game – any game – this message appears: Windows Protection Error. Please restart your machine. This causes me to have to turn off my machine from the switch. Then, when I reboot, I have to run Microsoft ScanDisk, and for some reason, every time it runs, the whole thing locks up, causing me to turn the machine off again. Please help me, as I'm finding this really annoying.

Calvin

A Almost all problems of this nature are down to drivers. When Windows goes to shut down, it whips through all the resident drivers saying, "Right you lot, piss off," and then waits for them to reply with, "OK, OK, we're going." If these drivers are badly written, they can never respond, causing Windows to sit and do nothing – a classic problem. Alternatively, they can paint blue screens of death such as the one you describe. I've had problems with drivers for my TNT2 Ultra in the past, but the latest set from the NVIDIA site are totally stable. I would start with these. Now, you don't say if you have a network card or modem in your machine, but my guess – especially as you sent your question via email – is that you have at least one. Try removing these devices from the Windows Device Manager one at a time, and then seeing if the problem persists. You can then narrow down the offending device.



Enjoy the freedom of the open road with the new Microsoft® Wireless IntelliMouse® Explorer. Supercharged with the most powerful IntelliEye™ optical technology, it scans the terrain up to 6,000 times a second, giving you supremely accurate and responsive cordless steering. A breakthrough in power-saving technology, its unique sensors recognise the presence of your hand to turn it on or off. It also features intelligent illumination to conserve battery power – dimming or brightening its lights in different surface conditions. Its unique thumb scoop and finger grooves assure a comfortable ride and because its wireless there are fewer restrictions on where you can travel. Available in right hand drive.

For more information visit

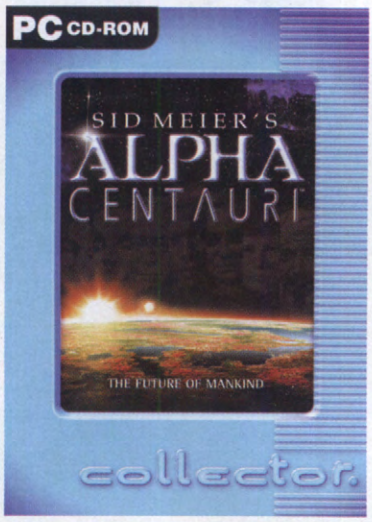
www.drive-me-wild.co.uk

© 2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, the Microsoft logo, IntelliEye, and IntelliMouse are trademarks or registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the US and/or other countries.

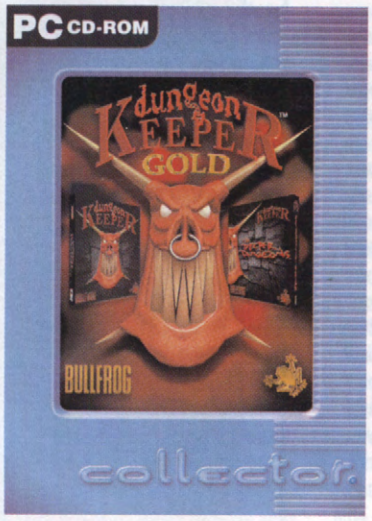
Microsoft®

BUY 2 GAMES GET 1 FREE

£7.99 EACH



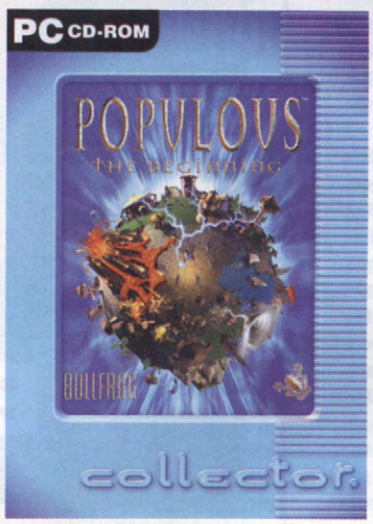
ALPHA CENTAURI



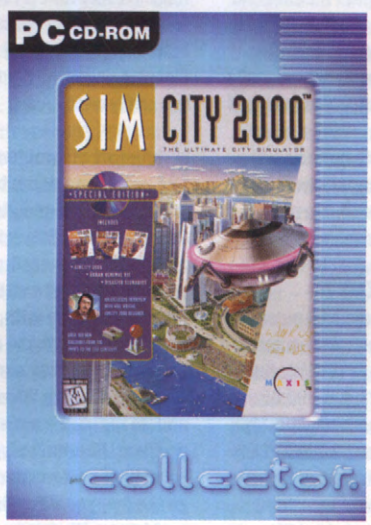
DUNGEON KEEPER GOLD

THEME HOSPITAL

NEED FOR SPEED III



POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING



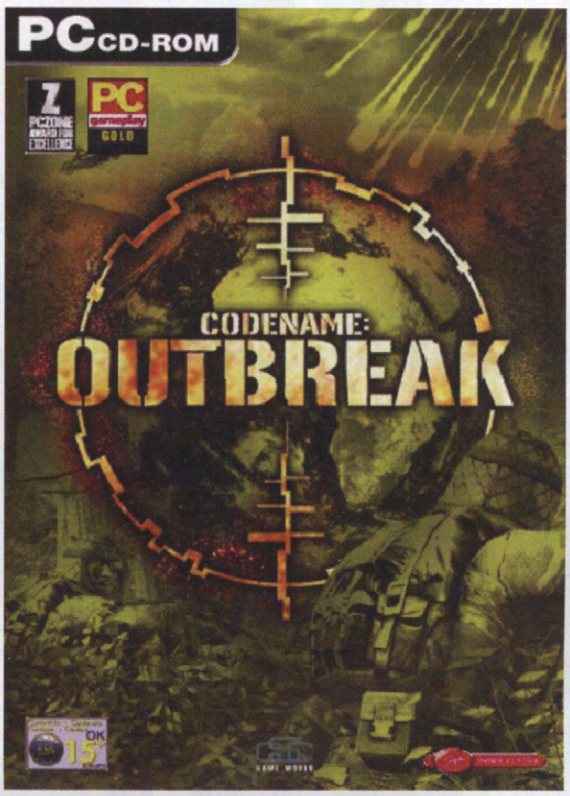
SIM CITY 2000

WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON

Virgin megastores

Offer ends 6th November. Stickered items only. while stocks last. Prices may vary in Eire

DEATH IS OUT THERE SOMEWHERE, BUT YOU WON'T SEE IT COMING...



Buy Codename: Outbreak and get £5 off with this voucher

WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON

Virgin megastores

GSC Game World © is a trademark of GSC Game World Co. Codename: Outbreak is a trademark of Virgin Interactive Entertainment Ltd. All images and logos other than the Virgin logo are trademarks of GSC Game World Co. ©2001 Virgin Interactive Entertainment. Virgin is a registered trademark and the Virgin logo is a trademark of Virgin Enterprise Limited. All right reserved.

£5 OFF

Codename Outbreak for the pc with this voucher

- Only one voucher may be redeemed per purchase.
- This voucher may not be exchanged in whole or in part for cash and cannot be used in conjuction with any other promotional voucher.
- This voucher is valid until 30 November 2001 at any Virgin Megastore in the UK.

branch no.

receipt no.

sales asst. initials

2 410948 005001

PCZONE TOP100

Welcome to the definitive buyer's guide for all PC Gamers. The following games are the best 100 games money can buy, split into genres to make your purchases even easier

Have you got money burning a hole in your pocket? If so, make a cheque or postal order payable to *PC ZONE* and we'll forget about writing the mag and get ourselves down the pub for a good drink-up. If you're not feeling altruistic then perhaps you might want to buy yourself a game, but which one? How can you sort the *Unreal Tournament* from the *Daikatana*? Relax, this is where the *PC ZONE* Top 100 comes in handy.

Every game listed here is worth buying. If you're a fan of a certain genre you can head straight for your favourite games, which are ranked in order of brilliance. Some of the games might be a bit long in the tooth but that shouldn't put you off. Most of the old-timers have been re-released on budget and you'll be able to find the rest pretty cheap if you shop around.

The rules are pretty simple. Each month we review a load of games. If any of them are good enough to enter the Top 100 they take their rightful place and the bottom one in that particular genre is consigned to the dustbin never to return again. As games are always improving, we re-evaluate all the titles in a genre every time there is a new entry.

Each month we'll also show you the games that we think are the Top 10 of all time. This month deputy editor Richie Shoemaker gets the chance to talk about all the games that he plays when he should be writing stuff for the mag.

WHEN WE SAY CLASSIC, WE MEAN IT

If a game gets a Classic rating (90 per cent or above) in *PC ZONE* you know it's going to be pretty spectacular. Unlike other organs, we don't shower Classics around like confetti at a royal wedding and you won't find one in every single issue. In fact, of all the games released this year, only four have been deemed worthy of our gold award, and that includes *Max Payne*, who won't even enter the Top 100 until next month.

Classics have to have something a bit different. They have to take the genre to new heights or impress with originality. For this reason you should also pay special attention to the games that receive our Award Of Excellence (80-89 per cent). When we say excellent, we mean excellent, and if you're a fan of the genre these games fall into you won't be disappointed. Put your faith in us and we won't let you down, and that's a promise.

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

HALF-LIFE

BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #71 • 95%

Taking the first-person shooter as its starting point, *Half-Life* redefines the genre with an engrossing story, cracking atmosphere and some of the best AI ever coded. *Half-Life* is probably still the best game you can install on your PC, and it's now available with the superb *Opposing Force* add-on in the *Generations* pack.

PUBLISHER Vivendi • 01189 209100

MAX PAYNE — PCZ #107 • 90%

It's not big and it's not clever, but for style and content *Max Payne* receives top marks. The character animations and soon-to-be-copied-by-everyone Bullet-Time mode are the real stars, it's just a shame it only lasts a few hours.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

UNREAL TOURNAMENT — PCZ #81 • 90%

Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake III*'s multiplayer, with a combination of well-designed maps and diverse gameplay. The single-player mode might be too short, but it's still going to be more than a challenge for most.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8188

QUAKE III ARENA — PCZ #87 • 89%

The biggest brand name in PC gaming is back. The sheer speed, intensity and unrelenting action of *Quake III* make it an essential purchase for all shoot 'em up fans, but sadly the lack of variety prevents it from topping *Unreal Tournament*.

PUBLISHER Activision • 08705 143525

CLIVE BARKER'S UNDYING — PCZ #101 • 85%

This atmospheric game is one of the most unsettling FPSs we've seen. The graphics and superb sound will have you leaping out of your seat. Here's hoping Barker's contribution will help push the future of narrative and gameplay forward.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

GUNMAN CHRONICLES — PCZ #97 • 84%

While comparisons to *Half-Life* are inevitable, *Gunman* contains more than enough nuances to stand out on its own merits. With a superb array of weapons, intense battles and a gripping atmosphere it's a must-have for any fan of the genre.

PUBLISHER Vivendi • 01189 209100

PROJECT IGI — PCZ #97 • 84%

Combining the action of *Soldier Of Fortune* with the stealth of *Metal Gear Solid*, *Project IGI* is the thinking man's FPS. It features vast, open landscapes, and its clever changes of pace and espionage-oriented storyline will keep you engrossed throughout.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE — PCZ #94 • 84%

The first single-player game to use the *Quake III* engine, *Voyager* offers enough thrills to please even the hardest Trekkie haters. A new scripting system and some clever CPU team-mates give renewed credence to solo play in this increasingly multiplayer genre.

PUBLISHER Activision • 08705 143 525

SERIOUS SAM — PCZ #102 • 81%

Serious Sam is a game that's seriously good fun. You get more monsters than you could ever wish for – they come out of the walls, the floor, pretty much everywhere. A good old-fashioned, arcade-style shooter, with a liberal dose of humour.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

CODENAME OUTBREAK — PCZ #107 • 80%

Rid the world of an invading parasitic alien race in missions that are full of suspense and action – relying on stealth over brute force. However, early missions are dull, and the graphics are somewhat lacking to say the least.

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive • 020 7551 4266

STRATEGY

COMMANDOS 2

BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #107 • 91%

NEW ENTRY There have been a few *Commandos* imitators but none have come close to this sequel to the original game. If you loved the first game, you're going to love this World War II strategy game even more. One of the most richly detailed games we've ever seen, absolutely massive, and brimming with original ideas.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive 020 8636 3000

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR — PCZ #89 • 90%

Command huge armies and engage in epic battles, send ninjas to assassinate generals and conquer your way through feudal Japan. The 3D engine works beautifully and the in-game options don't get in the way of the instant playability of the game. *Shogun* will blow you away.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

Z: STEEL SOLDIERS — PCZ #101 • 90%

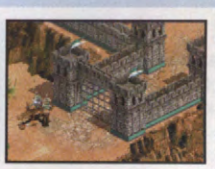
Z will re-ignite your passion for strategy games with its fast-paced in-yer-face action that allows you to get down and dirty from the off. The AI is superb, and as it's entirely mouse-driven, it's simple and easy to get into. What more could you ask for?

PUBLISHER EON • 0700 4366344

COSSACKS: EUROPEAN WARS — PCZ #101 • 89%

There are 8,000 troops at your disposal in this historically accurate RTS. Smooth unit movement and a 3D landscape with real physics modelling make it truly absorbing. With great graphics and sound effects to boot it's an essential purchase.

PUBLISHER CDV • 020 8880 4144



AOEII: COLLECTORS' EDITION — PCZ #84 • 88%

It might not be radically different from the original, but sometimes evolution is just as good as revolution. In *AOEII*, the gameplay is honed to perfection with balanced units and strong single- and multiplayer campaigns. Forget the hype of *Tiberian Sun* and try this classic RTS.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0845 5700 2000

GROUND CONTROL — PCZ #92 • 86%

RTSs are increasingly dropping resource management in order to concentrate on strategy. *Ground Control* pulls this off with flair, gorgeous looks and a brilliant camera. If you're after a 3D strategy title but don't fancy samurais, this is the answer.

PUBLISHER Vivendi • 01189 209100

SUDDEN STRIKE — PCZ #96 • 85%

Sudden Strike mixes WWII action with a heavy dose of realism in order to create a compelling RTS. Its clever resource management, huge selection of units and separate campaigns make it a must for RTS fans looking for something a bit different.

PUBLISHER CDV • 020 8880 4144

HOMEWORLD: CATACLYSM — PCZ #96 • 85%

Relic's mission to improve the already superb 3D RTS *Homeworld* has proved to be a great success. The *Homeworld* universe has been expanded, providing a more elaborate storyline and greater scope for tactical options than its predecessor.

PUBLISHER Vivendi • 01189 209100

MECHCOMMANDER 2 — PCZ #107 • 84%

If you prefer tactics over force, look no further than Microsoft's highly polished robot-based RTS. Its well-scripted storyline and superb atmosphere will keep you gripped from the first explosive mission to the last.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0845 5700 2000

EARTH 2150 — PCZ #90 • 84%

A fantastic 3D engine and great detail team up with sheer playability to make this one of the best RTS games around. *Earth 2150* is a more traditional strategy title than the likes of *Shogun*, and it has the rare quality of actually advancing the genre.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

DEUS EX

BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #93 • 94%

✪ Warren Spector takes the finer elements of *Half-Life*, *System Shock 2* and *Thief* and weaves an RPG of complex beauty that revolutionises computer games. A fascinating sci-fi plot and complete player freedom are just some of the reasons why *Deus Ex* is such a landmark wonder.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

PCZ #80 • 91%

✪ Definitely one of the most compelling, original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully mix the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it in the house on your own with the lights off to prove how hard you are.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE REDEMPTION

PCZ #92 • 89%

✪ This amazing RPG is a treat to play. An epic storyline, tactical combat and great acting and music more than make up for the fact that it's a linear hack 'n' slash game at heart.

PUBLISHER Activision • 08705 143525

THRONE OF DARKNESS

PCZ #109 • 88%

NEW ENTRY An enjoyable party based, strategic hack 'n' slash from the developers of *Diablo*. Take command of seven samurai as they fight their way through feudal Japan on a quest to overthrow the Dark Warlord. Beautiful and bloody.

PUBLISHER Vivendi • 0118 9209100

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

PCZ #87 • 87%

✪ An incredible game from Black Isle, creators of *Baldur's Gate*. It's a dark, adult scorcher of an RPG. Moreover, the character development is the best we've seen in any game of its kind and the story is compelling, with well-scripted dialogue.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4266

BALDUR'S GATE II

PCZ #96 • 85%

✪ The original *Baldur's Gate* was hailed as one of the best story-driven role-playing games ever. Although this sequel is not vastly different, it is bigger, better and extremely addictive. *Baldur's Gate II* is a must for all RPG fans.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4266

ARCANUM

PCZ #106 • 84%

✪ Whether you play through as a mage or a techy, you'll still find *Arcanum* hugely entertaining. Don't let its looks fool you – it has a great plot and flexible character development. A massive and addictive game.

PUBLISHER Vivendi • 0118 920 9100

ANANCHRONOX

PCZ #105 • 83%

✪ The release of *Anachronox* proves *Deus Ex* wasn't a fluke for Ion Storm. OK, it's not as good, but it's an interesting and genuinely funny game in its own right, and we don't get to say that about many games. Well worth a punt.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

MAGIC & MAYHEM: THE ART OF MAGIC

PCZ #107 • 80%

NEW ENTRY This hugely playable game includes a handy 3D camera, along with the type of gameplay that made the first *M&M* so addictive. A must for fans and RPG newbies.

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive 020 7551 4266

FINAL FANTASY VII

PCZ #66 • 80%

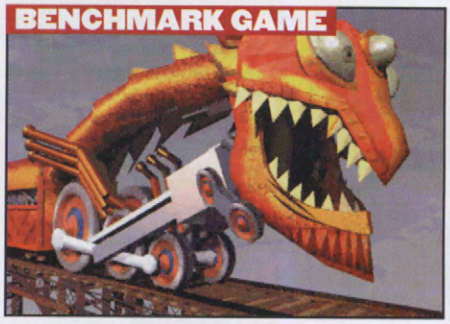
✪ Despite the release of *FFVIII*, we still rate this earlier episode in the series above it. The story is better, there are more sub-games and the whole thing is more involving, especially if you like Japanese-style cartoony graphics. And it's now on budget release.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

ACTION/ADVENTURE

GRIM FANDANGO

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #71 • 88%

✪ If you've followed the successes of LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must-buy. Sublime graphics and genuine humour ensure it's a classic of its genre. A word of warning: it's bloody hard and, if your mind doesn't work laterally, you'll be playing it until the day you die.

PUBLISHER LucasArts • 020 7368 2255

DISCWORLD NOIR

PCZ #79 • 87%

✪ Although the point-and-click adventure genre is dying, *Discworld Noir* is still very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games and is all the better for it in our opinion, particularly if you're not a fan of Terry Pratchett's zany, off-the-wall humour. Don't miss it.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0161 8278060

SEVERANCE: BLADE OF DARKNESS

PCZ #98 • 87%

✪ Anyone who doesn't mind being splattered with the kind of gore rarely seen outside of *Soldier Of Fortune* will find much to like in *Severance*. But it stands out from the usual hack 'n' slasher with its amazing engine and console-style combos.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

THE NOMAD SOUL

PCZ #83 • 86%

✪ Distinctly odd, but original nonetheless, *The Nomad Soul* is a huge, intricate world populated by lap-dancers and David Bowie. At turns adventure, beat 'em up and platformer, it's insanely ambitious and almost manages to pull it off.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

HITMAN: CODENAME 47

PCZ #98 • 85%

✪ Bringing back memories of *Leon* and *Day Of The Jackal*, *Hitman* recreates the cool excitement of carrying out a contract. Snipe from rooftops, disguise yourself in your victims' uniforms and walk away from explosions with calm elegance.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

PROJECT EDEN

PCZ #107 • 85%

✪ You control four variously skilled operatives in a nightmarish future metropolis that is as predictable as it is innovative. The combat and AI may be somewhat dull, but the varied puzzles and raft of cool gadgetry make up for it.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

BLAIR WITCH VOL 1: RUSTIN PARR

PCZ #96 • 84%

✪ As well as being a truly scary action/horror title, this is one of the finest action/adventure games we've played. The suspense is incredible, and a constant stream of jump-out-of-your-seat moments will leave you with a distinct lack of clean underwear.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

PCZ #84 • 83%

✪ LucasArts moves away from the point-and-click genre and into *Tomb Raider* territory for its latest Indy game, with the adventure elements still in place. Not bad, but not for traditionalists.

PUBLISHER Activision • 08705 143525

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND

PCZ #98 • 82%

✪ One of the hardest skills to master when developing a game is the ability to make your audience genuinely laugh with you rather than at you and, undoubtedly, *Escape From Monkey Island* is one of the most genuinely funny games to come out in the last couple of years.

PUBLISHER Activision •08705 143525

METAL GEAR SOLID

PCZ #96 • 82%

✪ Although it's been ported pretty much identically from the console version (with a few graphical improvements), *MGS*'s tense gameplay, well-designed levels and variety of challenging bosses makes it stand out from the majority of similar PC titles.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0845 7002000

RACING GAMES

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2.0

BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #98 • 86%

✪ With all the rally games available it was always going to be interesting to see how *2.0* would fare. Unsurprisingly, it blows away the competition. The graphics are superb, the detail all-encompassing and the car handles beautifully. If you have been waiting patiently for the definitive rally game, this is definitely it.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MIDTOWN MADNESS 2 PCZ #96 • 84%

✪ Buckle up for some high-speed action, as you race around London and San Francisco in this sequel. You won't find a more entertaining arcade driving game. The original *MM* was a belter, but with more cars and races and improved controls, *MM2* is now the daddy.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0845 7002000

F1 CHAMPIONSHIP: SEASON 2000 PCZ #97 • 82%

✪ While lacking the detailed realism of *GP3*, EA's latest F1 offering provides more fun and adrenalin-pumping moments than any other PC F1 game. With its mixture of arcade action and realism it is both accurate and easy to pick up.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

LE MANS 24 HOURS PCZ #87 • 81 %

✪ Although not quite as challenging as the race it's based on, *Le Mans 24 Hours* is a driving game for skilful players who know their brakes from their elbows. You can even get involved in a rewarding career mode, culminating in the famous race itself.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0161 8278060

GRAND PRIX 3 PCZ #94 • 80%

✪ This F1 title displays all the customary Crammond perfectionism. The detail is amazing, which makes it all the more puzzling as to why there is no teamwork. Don't expect much more than a 3D accelerated *GP2*, but if that's what you're after you'll love it.

PUBLISHER Infogrames•0161 8278060

INSANE PCZ #97 • 78%

✪ Primarily an online racing game, *Insane* allows you and your friends to indulge in some off-road racing mayhem in a range of different vehicles. Its wide selection of races will have you in hysterics, but the novelty does wear off pretty quickly.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

NEED FOR SPEED PORSCHE 2000 PCZ #90 • 78%

✪ Not as good as hooking up with your mates at the arcade, but still a damn good conversion of a damn fine game. Forget realism and concentrate on flinging your car around the track as fast as you can. Who needs depth when racing is this exciting?

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

RALLY MASTERS PCZ #89 • 77%

✪ Rally games tend to blend into one another quite seamlessly. After all, the cars look exactly the same and they go round the same tracks. *Rally Masters*, however, offers the all-important feel of a great driving game together with loads of options and some tasty graphics.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0161 8278060

TOCA 2 PCZ #76 • 76%

✪ Predictably, Codemasters has gone and done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrolheads. Graphically, it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it definitely is.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP PCZ #84 • 75%

✪ Close, but no *McRae*. That was the verdict from the boy Hill on this racer. It looks fantastic and the on-screen Ordnance Survey map is a nice touch, but it's let down by some poor camera angles and unnecessarily solid obstacles. Ouch.

PUBLISHER Actualise • 01625 855015

GOD GAMES

BLACK & WHITE

BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #100 • 95%

✪ One of our joint top games of all time, *Black & White* is worth the hype and more. Hundreds of challenges through wondrous landscapes, packed full of spectacular AI-enhanced creatures and some genuinely original ideas. Sell your friends and family if you have to, but get a copy of this game. Pure genius.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

CALL TO POWER II PCZ #98 • 85%

✪ *Civilization II* is one of the best games of all time, but that doesn't mean it doesn't need updating. It might not have the official *Civ* endorsement, but *Call To Power II* still retains the spirit of the game, while polishing almost every aspect of the gameplay.

PUBLISHER Activision • 08705 143525

THE SIMS PCZ #87 • 85%

✪ This offers a staggering amount of possibilities. Essentially, you create your own person, or family, and guide them through the ups and downs of life. It's the definitive docu-soap and makes for compelling gameplay.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

CAESAR III PCZ #70 • 84%

✪ Starting from scratch, you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens. So what? So it's probably one of the most utterly absorbing and addictive god sims in existence. Hail Caesar.

PUBLISHER Vivendi • 0118 920 9100

SIMCITY 3000 PCZ #74 • 83%

✪ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and new addicts alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01932 450134

ZEUS: MASTER OF OLYMPUS PCZ #97 • 83%

✪ From the creators of *Pharaoh* and *Caesar III* comes this intricate yet hugely playable micro-management god game. It is highly addictive, but suffers slightly from its lack of multiplayer options and a poor combat system.

PUBLISHER Vivendi • 01189 209100

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON PCZ #75 • 82%

✪ Pack out your own theme park with the most fiendish rides your imagination can conjure up. From rickety wooden dippers to *Nemesis*-style, white-knuckle gurners, *RollerCoaster Tycoon* is hugely addictive. Be warned.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0161 827 8060

DUNGEON KEEPER 2 PCZ #79 • 75%

✪ *Dungeon Keeper* was a great idea. *DKII* takes the essence of the original game, corrects all the mistakes, vastly improves the graphics, and doses the myriad of features with a wise hand. And it keeps us very happy indeed.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING PCZ #70 • 74%

✪ The original *Populous* was the game that put Bullfrog into orbit and made Peter Molyneux one of the biggest names in the industry. Even 'Peterless', the Bullfrog team proved they can do just as well without him.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

THEME HOSPITAL PCZ #71 • 73%

✪ We were sceptical at first. How can a sim game involving building hospitals be fun? But it is fun, damn fun. Building bigger and better hospitals and finding a cure for all our ills, including hairyitus, bloaty head and – the bane of all human existence – Elvis impersonators.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

SPORTS

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER: 01/02

BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #108 • 92%

✪ This update for the greatest management game ever sees the series consolidate itself as the best footy management game available on any platform. New features this time around include masked attributes (forcing you to scout for talent), updated team and player stats and all the new rules that FIFA has imposed on us. Buy it and kiss life goodbye.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

PCZ #98 • 88%

✪ *Pro Skater 2* is an unbelievable experience. The sense of speed and balance is uncanny, and there is almost as much satisfaction to be had from pulling off an acrobatic new move as there is from watching your skater break all his bones as he smashes his face against the concrete.

PUBLISHER Activision • 08705 143525

VIRTUAL POOL 3

PCZ #99 • 85%

✪ *VP3* has the perfect physics and graphics of its predecessors plus some cool new features, including multiplayer options, career mode and training videos by pool diva Jeanette Lee. It's the best pool sim you can buy, and it's almost as good as the real thing.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4266

FIFA 2001

PCZ #97 • 83%

✪ Once again the FIFA franchise gets its yearly makeover. There are only minor improvements over the last version, but it's still the best football game for the PC. The player animations and presentation are spot on, but we can't help feeling there's a better football game to come.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

SUPREME SNOWBOARDING

PCZ #85 • 83%

✪ Snowboarding is not a sport you'd expect to captivate a PC audience, but this game gives as exhilarating an experience as you could hope for without the risk of breaking a leg. Oh, and all the streetwise attitude you'd expect is there too, of course.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0161 8278060

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF 2000

PCZ #92 • 82%

✪ It's really not much different from last year's title, but this edition has enough subtle tweaks to make it a worthwhile purchase. It also has the best control system we've seen in what is definitely the best golf game available.

PUBLISHER Vivendi • 0118 920 9100

NBA LIVE 2000

PCZ #85 • 82%

✪ As slick as always, but what makes this special is the inclusion of teams from the '50s onwards, comedy haircuts and all. It's not quite as immediate as *Inside Drive*, but is a more complete simulation of the sport all round.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01932 450134

BUDGET

OPEN TENNIS 2000

PCZ #92 • 80%

✪ Not since Super Tennis on the SNES have we had so much fun hitting a ball back and forth over a net. After some initial reluctance, the whole office stopped fragging and started lobbing. For a near identical game with slightly better AI and more bugs, it's worth checking out *Roland Garros French Open 2001*. **PUBLISHER** Cryo • 0121 250 5070

BUDGET

JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL 2

PCZ #68 • 78%

✪ The finest snooker simulation on the PC. Chalk your cue and take on the PC or your mates and, when you're tired of the baize, you can move round and have a go on the fully featured darts board instead. Saves going down to the Working Men's Club.

PUBLISHER Virgin/Interplay • 020 7551 4266

ACTUA SOCCER 3

PCZ #72 • 72%

✪ If you can't get on with *FIFA* then *Actua* is the second port of call for footy fans. It plays a faster game and there's a good range of options and a huge number of teams to play against, which goes a long way to helping maintain its shelf life.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

3D ACTION/STRATEGY

OPERATION FLASHPOINT: COLD WAR CRISIS

BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #104 • 90%

✪ The most anticipated military game of the year was worth all the hype and more. This squad-based shooter can be played in both third- and first-person and is the ultimate military simulation package, with a stunning atmosphere and superb mission structures. Lock yourself away because this game deserves your full attention.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

BUDGET

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

PCZ #79 • 88%

✪ You don't get a second chance in a real war, and *Hidden & Dangerous* is the game that comes closest to putting you in the middle of hell on earth. It grabs you by the balls from the first mission and doesn't let up.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

HOSTILE WATERS

PCZ #101 • 87%

✪ A brilliant RTS/action game you can play purely strategically or leap into a unit and get up close and personal to the action. It's just a shame there aren't any multiplayer options though. Why make love when you can make war?

PUBLISHER Rage • 01512 372200

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

PCZ #95 • 85%

✪ This mammoth and original 3D action/strategy game includes third-person shooter, RTS, RPG and real-time combat elements. It also features a superbly balanced multiplayer option and almost naked women, which usually makes for a good time.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4266

SWAT 3: ELITE EDITION

PCZ #97 • 84%

✪ AI doesn't come much better. The spectacular graphics and command system come alive here. Although not as fun as *Counter-Strike*, it's more realistic, and features five new maps and countless weapon configurations.

PUBLISHER Vivendi • 0118 920 9100

SPEC OPS 2

PCZ #84 • 82%

✪ When *Spec Ops 2* came out it challenged *Hidden & Dangerous* for the top spot. The game puts you in charge of a four-man green beret squad intent on staying alive and shooting the enemy in the head. Incredibly realistic, with top-notch sound.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

BUDGET

WARGASM

PCZ #71 • 81%

✪ Famed for its flight sims, DID finally delivers an action game only it could produce. With helicopters, APCs and hapless infantry running about, this is as fast-paced as a tank game could be – and it's even better to share.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0161 827 8000

RAINBOW SIX GOLD PACK EDITION

PCZ #81 • 81%

✪ A landmark game in third-person action strategy games that was only surpassed by *Hidden & Dangerous*. Take control of your elite anti-terrorist squad, plan your missions ahead and indulge in some old fashioned killing. Also contains the *Eagle Watch* add-on pack

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 854 444

BATTLEZONE 2

PCZ #84 • 79%

✪ Stunning graphics and a winning blend of strategy and first-person action in this sequel to the highly acclaimed *Battlezone*. A smooth gaming engine and a good variety of missions means the fight for world domination never looked so good.

PUBLISHER Activision • 08705 143525

DELTA FORCE: LAND WARRIOR

PCZ #99 • 69%

✪ It might not be a *Counter-Strike* or a *Project IGI*, however the *Delta Force* series does have a loyal following who will probably buy it anyway. Superb multiplayer action and challenging on the highest difficulty level, but unfortunately dodgy AI.

PUBLISHER Novalogic • 020 7405 1777

FLIGHT SIMS

BATTLE OF BRITAIN

BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #99 • 89%

Allow yourself to be immersed in one of the most exciting and realistic combat flight sims around. The action is non-stop, the skies are crowded and the flight models actually 'feel right'. Even though the graphics and general gameplay may not be ground-breaking, *Battle Of Britain* is one of the best examples of a game that transports you right into the cockpit. Tally ho!

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337

FALCON 4

PCZ #72 • 88%

We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that, for once, we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* features incredible 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0161 8278060

B-17: THE MIGHTY 8TH

PCZ #96 • 87%

B17 reproduces the experience of piloting a WWII bomber. Everything's covered, from planning missions to dropping bombs. A must for WWII and realism freaks.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0161 8278060

COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2

PCZ #97 • 87%

If WWII dogfighting is your thing, then this is the game you have been waiting for. Its excellent user interface, engrossing campaigns, intense combat and superb graphics create a true sense of excitement and realism.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0845 7002000

EUROFIGHTER TYPHOON

PCZ #103 • 85%

Finally a flight sim that values the 'flight' aspect over the 'sim' so you can just enjoy the gameplay. *Tycoon* marks the future of the genre where the campaign engine takes care of itself while you play at being Tom Cruise.

PUBLISHER Rage Software • 0151 237 2200

SPACE COMBAT

X – GOLD

BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #82 • 87%

The spirit of *Elite* lives on in this massive trading epic from Germany, in which you must buy and fight your way back home to Earth. The combat side of the gameplay may not be the best on offer, but with goods to trade and races to discover, it rewards patience with variety and months of play. This title is deeply hypnotic and beautiful, rather than tense and frenetic.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656

TERMINUS

PCZ #93 • 86%

Who says the days of bedroom programming are over? *Terminus* proves you can make a great game on your own if you have the talent and passion. It just edges out *FreeSpace 2*. Available from **www.macgames.co.uk**.

PUBLISHER Vicarious Visions • www.vvisions.com

FREESPACE 2

PCZ #84 • 85%

Completely different from *X*, *FreeSpace 2* offers fast-paced dogfighting action all the way. It boasts a superb interface, an epic story and amazing graphics, but it's a bit short-lived if you don't play online.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4266

EDGE OF CHAOS: INDEPENDENCE WAR 2

PCZ #104 • 83%

It's likely to appeal more to die-hard space simmers, but *Edge Of Chaos* still takes steps to advancing the genre. Its graphics and absorbing free-form gaming are inspirational.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0161 827 8000

BUDGET

X-WING: ALLIANCE

PCZ #77 • 81%

At last. Fly the Millennium Falcon in the final episode of the long-running *X-Wing* series. Certainly the best-looking *X-Wing* game to date, *Alliance* is slow at first, but boy does it pick up later on.

PUBLISHER Activision • 08705 143525

ALL-TIME CLASSICS

In loosely descending order, *PC ZONE* news editor and resident console apologist Anthony Holden reveals his all-time top ten classics to a hesitant audience, well why not... even a biscuit can have an opinion

SUPER MARIO 64 (N64)

From slip-sliding away on Cool Cool Mountain to navigating the depths of the Hazy Maze Cave, Mario's exquisite bitspace is the ultimate virtual playground. The sense of wonder is unrivalled, the perfectly balanced reward structure the envy of developers the world over. This is what games are all about.

FINAL FANTASY VII (PSONE/PC)

Undeniably flawed and sadly released incomplete, this is still one of the most absorbing gameplay experiences around. Brilliant characters, a vast and lovingly realised gameworld, and an addictive power-up curve all add to the genius of what is probably the finest console RPG ever. 120 hours well spent.

STREET FIGHTER II (COIN-OP)

Never has a game held me in the grip of addiction as fiercely or for as long as the *Street Fighter* series, and few sounds can send a chill down my spine like the echoing roar of a well-executed shuryuken. How such balance, depth and longevity arises from such simplicity remains a mystery.

METAL GEAR SOLID (PSONE/PC)

The greatest stealth action game? The most successful attempt to incorporate cinematic elements into a game? Innovation by the spade? All true. But beyond all this lies something else: unparalleled atmosphere, and some of the most compelling characters ever given voice in a game.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME (N64)

Few games can claim to have the richness and quality of this epic adventure. Starting with a simple yet inspired control system that is imitated to this day, Nintendo crafted one of the most rewarding and liberating game journeys of all time with this game, a masterpiece in the truest sense of the word.

QUAKE II (PC)

Quake III may have perfected the deathmatch formula, but *QII* remains the true classic in my eyes. The single-player mode was compelling enough, but we all know it was really about the multiplay, and a thriving online community and abundance of brilliant mods ensured this was the king of multiplayer FPSs.

SYNDICATE (PC)

Squad-based isometric action in brilliantly rendered futuristic cityscapes, a simple interface, great sound effects and various missions: it's a flawless blueprint for entertainment. Few remember the addictive multiplayer, with its cat 'n' mouse dynamic and gauss gun shoot-outs. It's begging to be updated.

DUKE NUKEM 3D (PC)

Half-Life has its place, but when Gordon Freeman was still in short trousers another FPS hero gave us a very satisfying single-player FPS experience. Humour, self-parody, brilliant level-design, rewarding secret areas, innovative weapons and loads of chicks came together to create a true classic.

TENCHU: STEALTH ASSASSINS (PSONE)

Few games can hope to remain compelling while your character is glued to the spot for 10 minutes, waiting for an opening, but this ninja stealth manages it with style. It's all down to atmosphere, and the inestimable pleasure of slitting the throats of those foolish enough to oppose you.

DOOM (PC)

We recently fired this classic up in the *ZONE* office, and it only took two or three shotgun blasts to confirm that it belongs in just about any top ten list of good things. It's a game of sheer brilliance and exceptional quality. The fact that it remains one of the scariest games of all time is a mere bonus.

TALKING HEADS

We caught up with founder of Fever Pitch Studios and chief designer of *Conquest: Frontier Wars*, Eric Peterson, to talk about games, movie spin-offs and the future of the gaming industry

WORD COMMANDER Martin Korda

It's a little-known fact but everyone in the *ZONE* office has a subject they love talking about. Take Anthony for example. Our new boy news ed, often shares his worrying over-interest for Japanese comic books with us, in which (from what we can gather) jailbait oriental girls beat the crap out of each other, while their sidekicks morph into giant pandas. Each to their own...

On a slightly less sordid note, I've often been reprimanded during countless Supertests for my constant protestations that the interactive movie was actually a good thing, and that *Wing Commander IV* was one of the best games of all time. So in a desperate bid to shut me up, the rest of the *PC ZONE* team locked me in an office with a phone, a dictaphone, and just enough air to conduct an interview. With my last breaths I spoke to Eric Peterson, (who was not only involved in the development of *WCIV* and *Starlancer*, but is also the founder of Fever Pitch Studios) about his past, present, future and views on the gaming industry. Fortunately, they let me out when I'd finished, because none of them could be bothered to type the conversation up. Here's what was said...

You have a very long history in PC gaming. You worked on *Wing Commander IV* and *Privateer 2*. What was your role on these two games?

I came in at the end of *Wing Commander IV* to help them finish it. I was involved with playtesting, balancing and things like that. I didn't actually work on *Privateer 2: The Darkening*. However, I was working on a *Privateer* game at the time. *The Darkening* was never actually a *Privateer* game, but when Chris Roberts and I left to form Digital Anvil, they killed our *Privateer* game and renamed it *The Darkening – Privateer 2*. The *Privateer* game I worked on was actually the same team that is now working on *Freelancer*. The basis for *Freelancer* was taken from the original *Privateer*.

What was it like working with Chris Roberts? I hear he's quite a perfectionist.
Chris is one of my best friends, but he's also a pain in the arse because he's such a perfectionist. When Chris is focussed, he's unbelievable, but I think Chris now wants to make movies. It became very difficult to get him to make day-to-day decisions on games.

So what did you think of the *Wing Commander* movie?
I thought it was shit.

Really? I went into it expecting it to be bad, but I thought it turned out to be OK.
You thought it was going to be shit-tastic?

Yeah, something like that. What did you dislike so much about it?
Here's the deal. I was involved in the making of the movie. The script was so much better than the movie. What actually happened is we ran out of money. For example, the Kilrathi looked terrible...

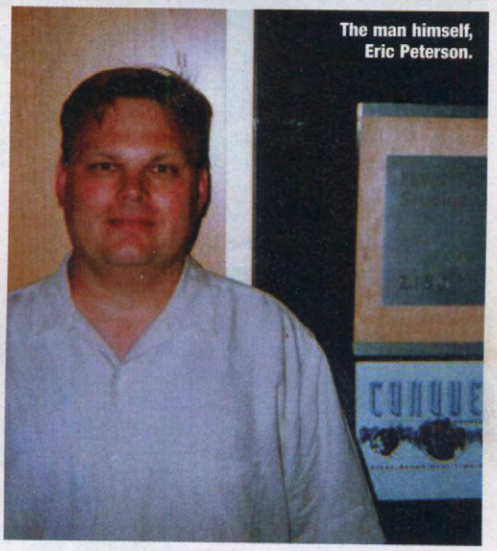
Why didn't you use the original puppets from the *Wing Commander* game?
Exactly, why didn't we? Chris and me had arguments about things, but it was his baby. Chris made a conscious decision that he wanted to step away from the games a little. Remember David Suchet, the captain in the film? He was supposed to turn out to be a traitor in the original script, but you don't find out about that in the movie, because we had to cut it. The script is 100 times better than the movie. Chris was basically told by Fox that he just had to cut together what he had and make a movie. If we'd had three more months, we could have ridden the coat-tails of *Star Wars* rather than going up against it. Chris is brilliant though, he's absolutely brilliant.

What did you personally learn from the *Wing Commander* and *Privateer* games?
That story is crucial. Story and gameplay are the number one things in a game. The most important

***Conquest*: Fever Pitch Studios' first game.**

***Starlancer* was ahead of its time in terms of multiplayer gameplay.**

***Wing Commander IV*: One of the most expensive games ever made.**



The man himself, Eric Peterson.

thing is to immerse the player in a universe, or a war, or something in which they can affect the outcome of the game.

The games industry seems to have moved away from the FMV-driven storylines pioneered by the likes of yourself and Chris Roberts, preferring in-engine cut-scenes instead. What's your view on this?
I think in-game FMVs are great. There are plenty of them in *Conquest*. I think they're important for moving the story along.

How about the interactive movie?
It's hard to do, in fact it's an organisational nightmare. It also costs a lot of money, and publishers are unwilling to fork out for it.
It was easy for Chris to go to a publisher and ask for $10 million to make an interactive movie, because he's Chris Roberts. A lot of other people who are coming up with great innovative games don't have the name behind them and so can't get the funds. Publishers have stopped pushing individual names in the industry, with the exception of the likes of Peter Molyneux. People don't really associate games with an individual any more, and rightfully so, because it's much more about teams of people.

OK, let's move on a bit in your career, to when you started up with Digital Anvil. Did *Starlancer* fulfil your expectations?
Based on games like *Rainbow Six*, we thought people would enjoy playing co-operatively in *Starlancer*. To be honest, I think we misjudged things. It seems that people saw *Starlancer* as a singular experience. It sold OK, probably about 400,000 units, but we were actually expecting it to do a little better. We thought the storyline and cut-scenes were good, but I think people would actually prefer to play against aliens, rather than against humans. It was really like World War II in space. People didn't seem to understand that if you got stuck on a mission, you could just call up a friend and get them to help you through it. The multiplayer deathmatch wasn't as popular as we'd hoped either, which is a shame as we'd worked really hard on it. I think that we were a bit ahead of our time actually.
If we'd released it say two years from now when more people have broadband, then I think the game would really have taken off. If you can play with your friends on your wing and tell them to get the bogey on your right and things like that, then that kind of thing is going to go crazy.

"Story and gameplay are the number one things in a game. The most important thing is to immerse the player in a universe"

In that case, do you have any plans to make a sequel to *Starlancer* in a couple of years' time which fulfils this dream?
It's possible, but first I think broadband needs to reach that critical stage. Us humans are social animals. We like to talk, we like to compete, we like to co-operate together, we like to feel a sense of community. That's why people are in clans. But just imagine if people could talk to each other during a game, tell each other how they want to be backed up. You'd actually get to live some cool experiences. Typing conversations detracts from that.

When you set up Digital Anvil and then Fever Pitch Studios, what goals did you specifically have in mind – apart from making games of course?
The two companies were completely different animals. Of course we always wanted to create games with the highest possible production values. As Digital Anvil, we made some mistakes as a company. The movie was a big risk, and probably on reflection, we should have held back until

Eric says games are a team effort.

The Darkening wasn't orignally a *Privateer* game.

we'd released at least a couple of games. However, with both companies we basically just wanted to make games that we wanted to play – things that are challenging and that we enjoy. For example, I play *Conquest* more than I play any other game I've ever played.

What do you think is the next step for real-time strategy games?
RTS games have been done in every era, so there's nowhere to go on that front. I think RTS needs to move forward by bringing in more strategy elements. *Conquest* has a lot of strategy, but there's still room for improvement. A lot of RTS games are just about building huge armies and rushing the enemy. What we've tried to do is to concentrate on organising your supplies, as well as your armies. Tactics and strategy are the areas that this genre needs to improve in.

What's your opinion on the growing trend in RTS games for doing away with resource management altogether?
I think that's kind of neat. However, I think warfare is all about supply. It gives so many opportunities for offence and defence. War has always been about economy. We have talked about making a game which concentrates just on the warfare aspects, but I think that just takes away too much of the strategy elements.

Can you explain your reasoning behind putting computer-controlled admirals into *Conquest*?
The admirals are basically there to help you. Wars have always been fought on multiple fronts, so we decided that you'd be able to fight on 16 maps at the same time. The multiple-maps principle is borrowed from *Risk*, where you can shift your armies around various regions.

Do you have any plans to create an online game based around this concept, where a human player controls one fleet in one sector as part of a larger force?
We have actually talked about it. We're trying to work out what to do next, but that has definitely been discussed. It could be like a territory capture game, where three or four factions start with a territory, and then over a time limit, they have to try and capture each others' territories. It's something we're definitely considering.

Conquest is in 2D. Was this a conscious decision or was it due to time or financial restrictions? Are you thinking of moving into full 3D RTS in the future?
Initially we had a 3D interface designed for the game. In fact, we'd made it even before *Homeworld* appeared. What happened was that we went through a whole load of playtesting and people had a really hard time following a massive amount of units in 3D. We realised it wasn't going where we wanted. The fun factor wasn't there and it was really complicated. We wanted to get across to the mass market. The experience we wanted to create was more of a *Braveheart* style of battle, with a lot of things happening at once and with loads of strategy involved. For example, we wanted you to be able to circle around and flank somebody easily, which is why we kept the kind of 2D tabletop view for the game, so that people could do this kind of thing far more easily. It was a decision we made for the sake of the gameplay. It would have been great if we could have used a fully 3D interface, but for many people, the learning curve involved would just have been too steep. You have five minutes to grab someone with your game, and if they think it's too complicated...

"We wanted to create a *Braveheart* style of battle, with a lot of things happening at once and with loads of strategy involved"

... They take it back to the shop and demand a refund?
Exactly. That's precisely why we went away from that. What we did instead was to make the resources in the game far more tactical.

What's the one thing you're proudest of in *Conquest: Frontier Wars*?
Just getting it done. After Microsoft cancelled the game, it was a big blow to us. However, after Ubi Soft picked the game up we had loads more time to polish it, like giving it four levels of AI.

There's nothing worse than a game with rubbish AI.
I agree, and the AI is one of the things I'm proudest of in the game. If you play a skirmish game of *Conquest*, you'll never play the same game twice. Each of the three opponents has three different paths they can take, as well as four levels of AI. In fact, the most advanced AI level beats me five out of six times. We've had people teaming up, three or four people versus one AI opponent on the hardest level, and then they brag about it on our message boards when they manage it. But that's exactly the kind of thing we wanted.

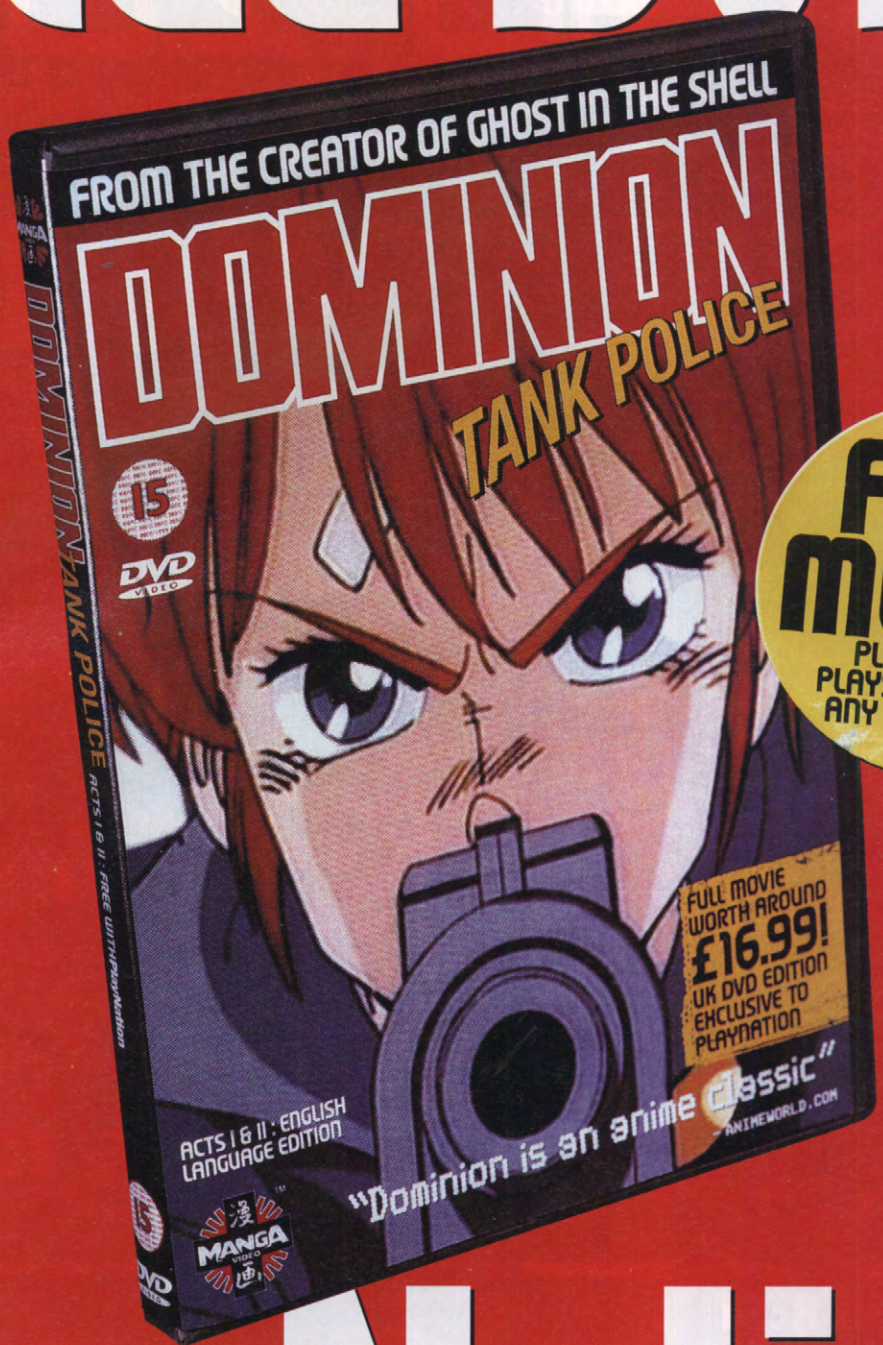
If you had more time and more resources, what's the one thing that you would change or improve about *Conquest*?
If I could change one thing, I think I'd probably put the fleet admirals back into the single missions. Missions are more about protecting your fleet and admirals than being able to form them. But after it came out, people were getting frustrated that they couldn't form fleets in these individual missions. So that's probably something we'll do in the expansion pack.

When do you think the expansion pack will be out?
It's planned for a release next September, but of course that will depend on how well the game sells. If it's a hit, we'll go ahead with the expansion pack, if it flops we'll move onto something else.

So what's next for you guys?
We've got the expansion pack to work on and as we talked about earlier, we're considering doing a MMO strategy game. We're in negotiations with several companies at the moment about what we're going to do next. We want to change the world, we want to do something that's new and exciting, and at the same time, fun. We've got about four different ideas on the table, and I guess we'll just have to wait and see.

Not only has Eric had a major influence on the PC games market over the last few years, it's obvious he also has a great deal of determination to continuously come up with new, innovative and exciting ideas. The future is looking bright for Fever Pitch Studios and you can check out our exclusive review of their first game, *Conquest: Frontier Wars*, on page 72. From what he said to me, I'm still hoping that one day he, and the rest of his team, will realise the dream started by Chris Roberts and create the ultimate MMO, interactive movie space combat sim based in the *Wing Commander* universe. Perhaps then I'll shut the hell up and give everyone else round the office some peace. Here's hoping. PZ

FREE DVD!



PlayNation

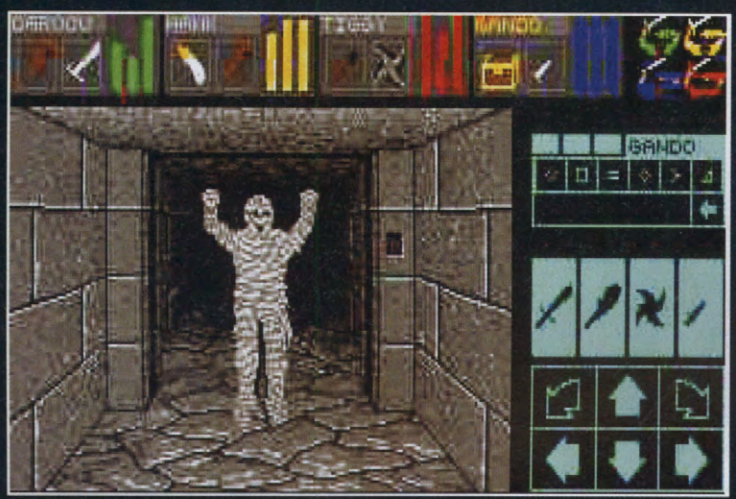
THE VOICE OF PS2™ GAMERS

FREE MANGA DVD WITH ISSUE 4 OF PLAYNATION MAGAZINE
ON SALE THURSDAY 29 NOVEMBER • ONLY £2.99

JANUARY 1987

RETRO ZONE

GOING BACK TO A TIME WHEN GAMES WERE GAMES AND WOMEN WEREN'T INVENTED, IT'S JASON MOORE AND RHIANNA PRATCHETT



"Grrrrrrrrrrr."

GAUNTLET

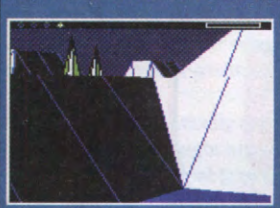
Four go marauding

The big game of this month was *Gauntlet*, a conversion from the heyday of Atari Games, and the first title to put four player gaming on the map. You got to play as Thor the warrior, Thyra the valkyrie, Merlin the wizard, or Questor the elf, and traverse a variety of monster stuffed mazes in search of treasure while dispatching hordes of monsters and skeletons with your flying weaponry. The multiplayer part of the game allowed you to clear the harder levels with ease, but solo play inevitably involved unlocking doors then running like hell to avoid the monsters you'd set free. While these 8-bit versions certainly capture some of the atmosphere of the coin-op, the lack of levels maintained in memory meant additional loading was required during play, which often meant your reward for guiding your team through a treacherous cavern was two minutes of ear screeching cassette loading.

Classic co-operative multiplayer gaming.

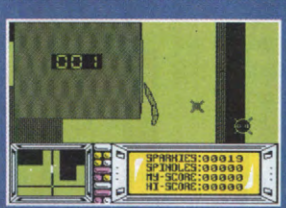
Forget about stupid names likes]-[3LL/\\iS7, in the olden days you knew who was who.

THE BEST OF THE REST



THE SENTINEL
(BBC/C64)

One of the most bizarre games of all time. Simple to learn, yet took a lifetime to master. Trees turned into boulders, robots turned into trees, and 'meanies' tried to warp you into hyperspace. Dedicated strategists loved it and ensured *The Sentinel* reeched cult status.

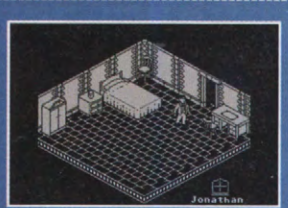


FAT WORM BLOWS A SPARKY
(Spectrum)

This top-down game actually took place within a ZX Spectrum, and your worm character crawled along the printed circuits eating sparkies and shooting at creepers and sputniks. Your goal was to find a disk drive with which to clone yourself and create your own army.

SPACE HARRIER
(Amstrad/Spectrum/C64/128/PC)

Originally a coin-op game *Space Harrier* took the arcades by storm and was also a success on the Amstrad, Speccy and PC. Fast and slick with breath-taking graphics and great hydraulics, the object was to live as long as possible and kill all kinds of nasties along the way.



NOSFERATU
(Amstrad)

Time to pass the garlic for a bit of vampire, no sorry vampyre killing action in this isometric puzzler. Your task was to explore various spooky areas as Jonathan Harker, Lucy Harker and Van Helsing, solving quests to reach your goal of vanquishing he of little tan.

SUPER HUEY II
(C64)

This was much trickier than it's predecessor, so you couldn't just get away with flicking through the flight manual. Never had we seen so much navigating equipment in one place, plus it had a rather cool on-board computer. It was a hit with flight simmers everywhere.

‹‹ STOP PRESS ››

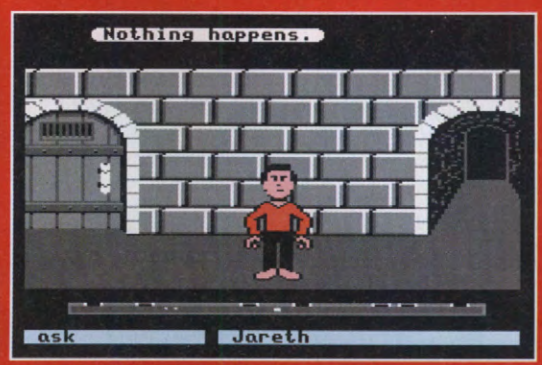
GAMING NEWS FROM JANUARY '87

In January 1987, Commodore were the undisputed kings of the hill. Sure, there was the Spectrum, but surely even Sir Clive himself was secretly envious of those funky Rob Hubbard SID sounds, and those chunky coloured sprites. Trying to steal the C64's thunder was the Amstrad CPC, with its free monitor and in-built cassette recorder. Hi-resolution colour certainly gave Amstrad the technical edge over the Spectrum, but had a higher price tag. The result of this three-way sales battle was that games companies tended to release titles for all three formats. Spectrum users grew frustrated because their screenshots were always omitted from advertising, Amstrad users wondered why the Spectrum version was a pound cheaper, while Commodore users knew their version was the one the programmers really concentrated on.

Activision seemed to have nailed itself onto a sinking ship, as it plundered recent movie releases to deliver computer versions of *Howard The Duck* and the David Bowie fantasy flick, *Labyrinth*. Both were incredible flops at the box office, and the games suffered much the same fate. Another huge disappointment was Odin's future-sport title, *Hyperball*, which destroyed all the good work the company had done with *Arc Of Yesod* and *Robin O'Woods* with jerky scrolling and completely unfair computer opponents.

Years before anyone had heard of *Colin McRae* let alone *Operation Flashpoint*, the Darling Brothers wrote games for '80s budget king, Mastertronic. In 1986 they left the company to found Codemasters, and this month saw the release of possibly the biggest budget title ever to hit an 8-bit machine *BMX Simulator*, a top down racing game played on a single screen. The bike graphics were rudimentary to say the least, but overlaid against detailed courses. Intense competition between you and rival bikes made the title hard to put down.

You want future sports? Wait for *Speedball*.



"Well ask him again then."

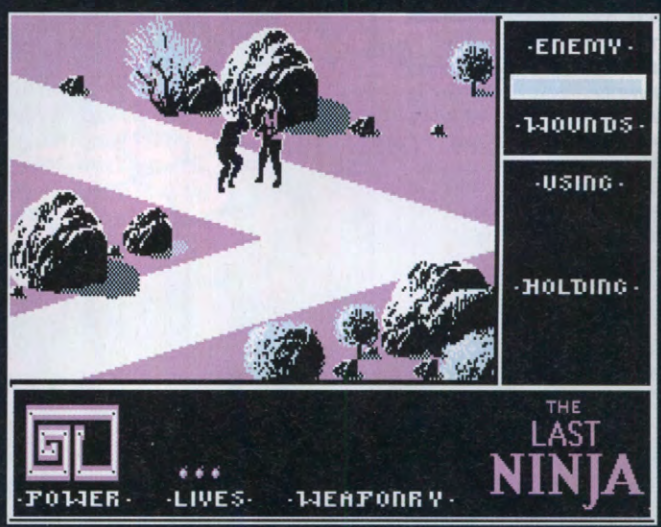
The gameplay, the music, the atmosphere. This game was the *Deus Ex* of its day.

THE LAST NINJA

C64 owners live by stealth and cunning

Riding at the top of the games chart this month was *The Last Ninja* by System 3. This oriental adventure game was set over a map made up of single isometric screens. With the need for scrolling eliminated, huge effort was put into creating detailed backgrounds, providing a backdrop of stunning paddy fields and entire Chinese villages. And, as if the stunning scenery wasn't enough, a superb Ben Dagleash soundtrack underlined the action throughout. Commodore fans heralded *The Last Ninja* as the ultimate technical showcase, leaving Spectrum owners eagerly waiting for their largely monochrome version some months later. Two sequels later and with the original developers working on an all new *Last Ninja* game for PC, it's pretty clear the hero wasn't the last ninja at all.

Also one of few games to ever sneak nunchaku past the powers that be.



The ultimate argument for upgrading to a C64.

Retro King Jason Moore *is the Editor of* Retrogames *magazine, runs* **www.retrogames.co.uk** *and also sells old games and hardware through his very own shop.*

ON THE CD

This month's superb CDs feature Spider-Man, Max Payne, a sheep, a dog and even the odd wolf. Enjoy...

WORDS Rhianna Pratchett DISCS Matt Cheshire and Lee Cocker

HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto.

CD ROM HELP PHONE INTERCHANGE on 0152 5711 482 any weekday between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday between 10am and 2pm, **or email pc_zone@interchange.co.uk** Please do NOT phone the *PC ZONE* office. Thanks.

BEFORE YOU DIAL... IF YOU ARE CALLING THE HELPLINE, PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call. If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, soundcard, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault. Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call, so you can jot down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

You need at least a Pentium 266 with 32Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROMs

Many of the programs on our cover CDs are designed to run under Windows 95/98 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium II 300 with 64Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run. Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are 3D accelerator only

DISCLAIMER

This disc has been thoroughly tested at all stages of its production. However, it is always wise to use a virus checker on any software before running it. Dennis Publishing Limited cannot accept any responsibility for any loss, disruption or damage to your data or your computer system (including hardware) that may occur while using either the disc or programs and data on it.

ON THE CD DEMOS

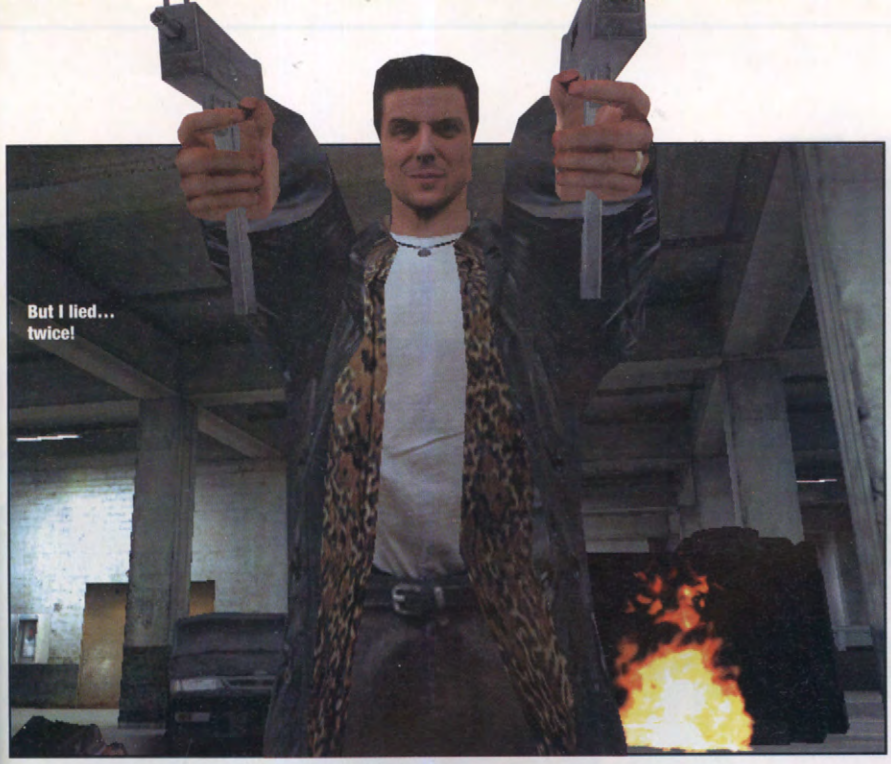
SPIDER-MAN

Activision · Disc 1

Something to get your spider senses tingling this month with our exclusive *Spider-Man* demo. Take the web-wielding one for a spin through a few missions in easy, normal, hard and kids mode, while meeting a few familiar faces from the Marvel universe, such as the rubber-clad Black Cat. Great fun and one of the most faithful comic book adoptions we've seen for a long time.

CONTROLS

Up	Up arrow
Down	Down arrow
Left	Left arrow
Right	Right arrow
Jump	Num pad 2
Kick	Num pad 6
Punch	Num pad 4
Web	Num pad 8
Aim	Num pad 7
Zip Line	Num pad 3
Swing Num	Num pad 9


But I lied... twice!

THE NATIONS

Jowood · Disc 1

Described by our very own Keith Pullin as a "surreal mix of *The Settlers*, *Zeus* and *Black & White*", your aim in *The Nations* is to create a thriving economic community by caring for an eclectic group of characters under your control. A welcome change from the anally historically accurate RTS, *The Nations* is a pleasant if underwhelming experience. But don't take our word for it, try this mission for yourself.

CONTROLS

Mouse

Build your own gingerbread nation.

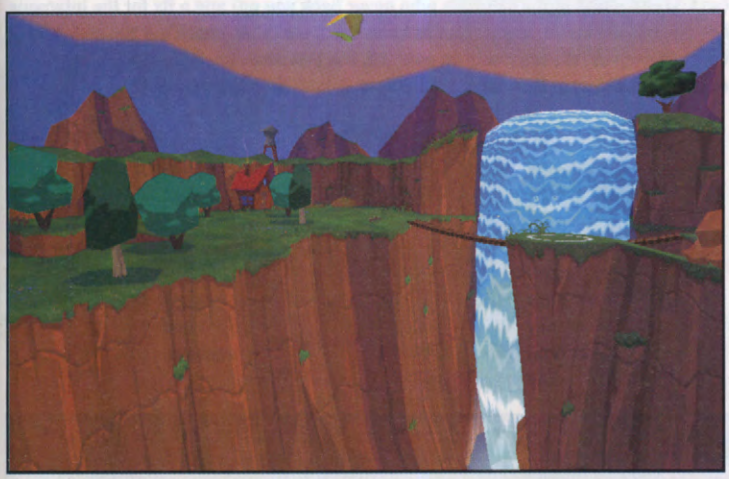
MAX PAYNE

Take 2 Interactive · Disc 2

Max is a man with a grudge, a man with a mission, a man... clearly in pain. Now you can be that man in this demo tutorial with two levels from the full game. Somewhat of a triumph of style over substance (and we all need that occasionally), *Max Payne* is a good example of a game that features looks over intelligence. And it works a treat.

CONTROLS

Forward	W	Zoom	E
Back	S	Painkiller	Tab
Strafe left	A	Bullet Time combo	Mouse 2
Strafe right	D	Shoot	Mouse 1
Crouch	C	Reload	R
Jump	Space	Cycle weapons	Mouse-wheel


Snatch yourself some woolly friends.

SHEEP, DOG 'N' WOLF

Infogrames · Disc 2

In the dead of a Loony Toons night, you can't sleep for the sounds of those sheep a-rustling. Here's your chance to try your hand or rather paws (as you'll be assuming the role of Ralph Wolf) at some ovine-nabbing from under the nose of the watchful Sam Sheepdog. One of the best attempts at capturing the Looney Toons spirit.

CONTROLS

Up	Up arrow	Super race	Z
Down	Down arrow	Camera L/R	A/S
Left	Left arrow	Tiptoe	Left Ctrl
Right	Right arrow	Inventory	Left Alt
Action	X	Map	F12
Jump	Space		

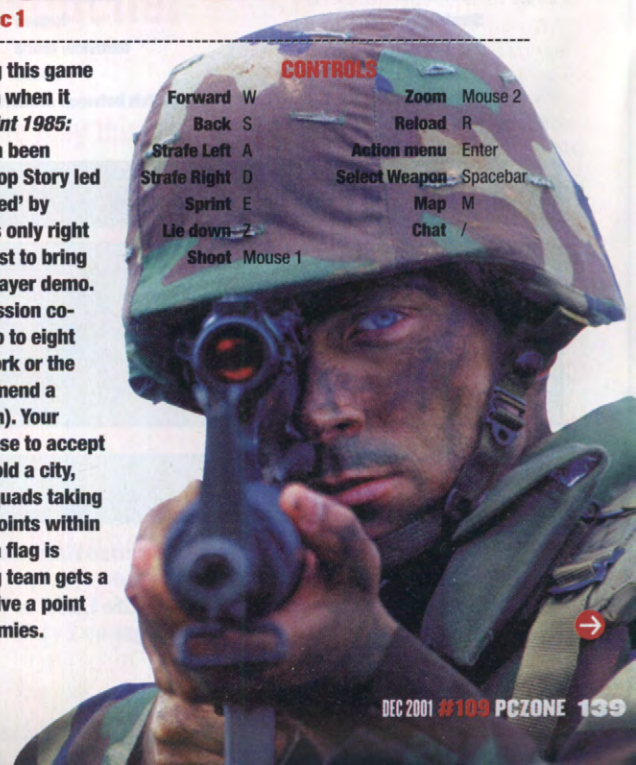
OPERATION FLASHPOINT

Codemasters · Disc 1

We've been tracking this game since its conception when it was called *Flashpoint 1985: Status Quo*. It's even been rumoured that our Top Story led to it being 'discovered' by Codemasters, so it's only right we should be the first to bring you the new multiplayer demo. You can play the mission co-operatively with two to eight people over a network or the Internet (we recommend a 128Kbps connection). Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to reach and hold a city, and to stop other squads taking control of the flag points within the city. Each time a flag is taken, the capturing team gets a point. You also receive a point for neutralising enemies.

CONTROLS

Forward	W	Zoom	Mouse 2
Back	S	Reload	R
Strafe Left	A	Action menu	Enter
Strafe Right	D	Select Weapon	Spacebar
Sprint	E	Map	M
Lie down	Z	Chat	/
Shoot	Mouse 1		



STRONGHOLD

Take 2 interactive · Disc 1

This demo gives you the chance to try your hand at building your dream home. It will take you through the basics of castle building and also features some invasion and economic scenarios. Learn to maintain your economy, build upwards and, most importantly, defend your stony fortresses.

CONTROLS

Mouse

CODENAME OUTBREAK

Virgin interactive · Disc 1

Codename Outbreak may not be the most original FPS around, but with the combination of the suspense of *AvP* and the pace and strategy of *Delta Force*, it certainly deserves your attention. This demo gives you the chance to play through both single-player and multiplayer modes.

CONTROLS

Forward	W	**Open/Use**	Enter
Back	X	**Inventory**	I
Strafe left	A	**Magnification**	M/Right mouse button
Strafe right	D	**Reload**	R
Crouch	Z	**Miniview mode**	/
Space	Jump	**Pause**	P
Weapons	1-7	**Switch between soldiers**	F4
Fire	Left mouse button/Ctrl		

COUNTER-STRIKE 1.3 FULL

Vivendi · Disc 1

The new version of the most popular online shooter is here and we're first with the full upgrade. New features include a brand new spectator mode, voice communication (so you can shout at the cowards who never back you up) and a fix for the infamous bunny-hopping cheat. If you want to know what we think, check out the review in our round-up of real-life mods on page 88. You can also check out our world exclusive preview of the new single-player *Condition Zero* on page 42.

CONTROLS

Forward	W	**Weapons Special Function**	Mouse 2
Back	S	**Reload**	R
Strafe left	A	**Drop weapon**	G
Strafe right	D	**Cycle weapons**	Mouse wheel
Crouch	Z	**Use item**	E
Jump	Space	**Flashlight**	F
Buy	B	**Chat**	Y
Select Team	M	**Team chat**	U
Fire	Mouse 1		

ON THE CD MOVIES CD1

ON THE CD PATCHES CD1

Operation Flashpoint Ultimate Update 1
Operation Flashpoint Ultimate Update 2
Operation Flashpoint Mission Upgrade
Half Life 1.1.0.7 to 1.1.0.8
Gangsters 2 v1.07

ON THE CD MODWATCH CD2

Infiltration v2.86
Front Line Force v1.3a
Front Line Force Map Pack
Urban Terror

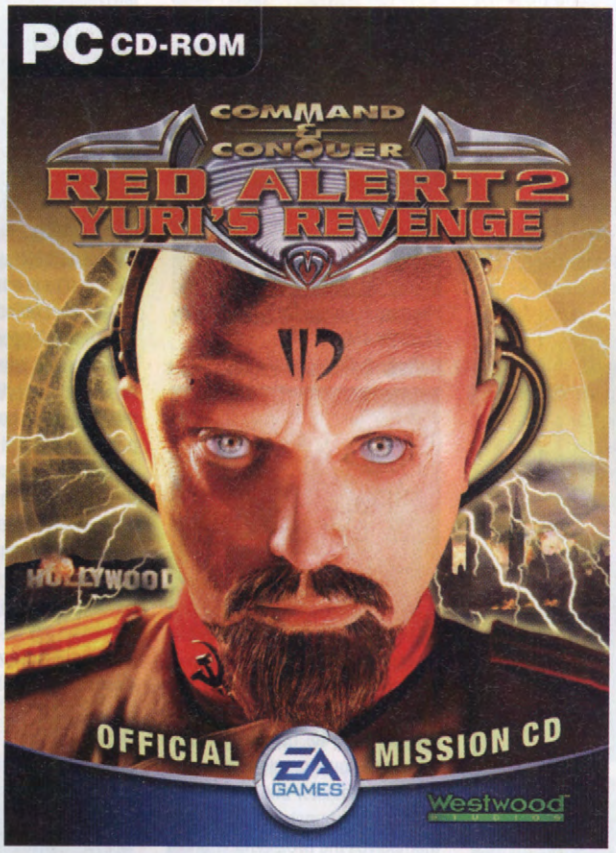
ON THE CD MAPS CD2

Quake III Deathmatch Maps
Operation Flashpoint Missions And Maps
Serious Sam Maps
Tribes 2
The PC ZONE Map Pack

ON THE CD EXTENDED PLAY CD2

Turn to page 142 where Tony Lamb brings you a choice selection of map goodies from *Thief II* and *Earth 2150*.

CAN YOU STOP YURI?



Buy Command & Conquer™ Red Alert™ 2 Yuri's Revenge™ and get £3 off with this voucher

You must own the original Command and Conquer™ Red Alert™ 2 to play this mission expansion pack

© 2001 Electronic Arts Inc. Command & Conquer, Red Alert, Yuri's Revenge, Westwood Studios, EA GAMES, EA GAMES logo and Electronic Arts are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. All Rights Reserved. EA GAMES™ and Westwood Studios™ are Electronic Arts™ brands.

WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON

Virgin megastores

£3 OFF

Command & Conquer™ Red Alert 2™ - Yuri's Revenge™ for the pc with this voucher

- Only one voucher may be redeemed per purchase.
- This voucher may not be exchanged in whole or in part for cash and cannot be used in conjuction with any other promotional voucher.
- This voucher is valid until 30 November 2001 at any Virgin Megastore in the UK.

branch no.

receipt no.

sales asst. initials

2 410895 003006

EXTENDEDPLAY

It's all about tactics in this month's Extended Play, with ace sneak 'em up *Thief II* leading the way for first-person game fans, and the ever popular strategy game *Earth 2150* following close behind

SNEAKING ABOUT Tony Lamb

TRY IT YOURSELF

Installation of all these maps and mods is pretty straightforward, but remember to always check out .zip files for any special instructions.

For *Thief II*, you can't go wrong if you use the Darkloader utility to run all of your missions rather than unzipping them yourself and filling up your hard drive with a load of monster files. Check it out install it, and then use it to enjoy our other *Thief II* treats.

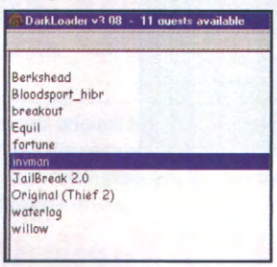
Earth 2150 is just as easy. Create a sub-directory underneath your ssi/earth2150 game directory, call it "levels" and unzip the files into there. They can then be selected and set up from the in-game menus in the normal way.

THIEF II

Looking Glass Studios' *Thief* and *Thief II* turned the first-person shooter game on its head by using the familiar viewing perspective but with a whole new ideology. You have weapons, but generally the objective is to avoid using them, employing stealth and guile to achieve your aims instead. This mission collection will stretch your skills to the limit, so pull that hood up, stick to the shadows and enjoy…

Darkloader 3.08

Author: Bjoern Henke
Filename: darkloader.zip
Size: 362Kb
Rating: ★★★★★



Darkloader is very useful utility.

Darkloader is a useful utility for anyone who wants to tackle third-party *Thief II* missions. Instead of unzipping them and clogging up your hard disk, you just use Darkloader to start the mission of your choice (or the original game). It's small, easy to set up, tells you about each mission at a glance, and is a cinch to use. Just check out its instructions to see how useful this utility can be for you.

BloodSport

Author: Metalhead
Filename: bloodsport_hibr.zip
Size: 28.4Mb
Rating: ★★★★☆

Listen guys, can't we talk about this? Guys?

Another huge file, but worth every minute as you struggle to free Garrett the master thief from the clutches of a bunch calling themselves the Brotherhood of the Raven. It seems they have plans to make you fight to the death in an arena, so you need to get away – fast. That isn't easy, though – your jail is extensive, there are lots of soldiers, and the AI is impressive. Getting out of your cell is the easy bit. Unfortunately, due to lack of space we couldn't squeeze this map onto this month's CD, but it will be on next month's, and it is available from www.pczone.co.uk.

Equilibrium

Author: Conor "SilentSleep" Armstrong
Filename: equil.zip
Size: 2Mb
Rating: ★★★★☆

Equilibrium is dark and dingy – turn the lights on.

Proof that good things come in small packages. Plenty of atmosphere, a genuinely spooky feel, an overall great design and superb AI implementation (so much so, in fact, you might just think you're in a multiplayer game). Your objective is to sneak into an old Keeper facility and basically find what you can, but this simple storyline masks a mission with a positively wicked puzzle in it. You'll need to take everything in, avoid no less than five assassins and make the most of your *Thief* skills just to survive this one.

The night I ghosted Berkshead

Author: Tim Murray
Filename: berkshead.zip
Size: 689Kb
Rating: ★★★☆☆

This looks like trouble.

A simple and quite small mission that sees you locked away in Berkshead Jail. You were silly enough to get caught with a petty thief called Kaplin. He wanted to sell you information about a Hammerite faction who have taken over Crickhollow church, for reasons unknown. Luckily for you, a friendly guard has left your cell unlocked, but now you have to escape, find Kaplin and find out more about the Hammerites and Crickhollow church. You won't find any new items, sounds or textures here – it's the author's first try at a *Thief* mission – but some good simple entertainment nonetheless.

Waterlogged

Author: Belboz
Filename: waterlog.zip
Size: 1.5Mb
Rating: ★★★☆☆

You don't have to kill them, but it's fun.

A classic thieving mission. The local authorities are throwing a party to celebrate the opening of a new public swimming baths, and are having a competition too.

NET ADDRESSES

www.pczone.co.uk
So damned good it makes your teeth itch. The number one site for all your gaming needs.

www.eidosinteractive.com/gss/legacy/thief_metalage/index
The official Eidos website and it's mouth-wateringly full of news, wallpapers, designer info, game hints and other goodies. No extra missions unfortunately.

www.thief-thecircle.com
A great site for *Thief II* information, and enough to keep any fan happy. Check it out for news, fan missions and reviews, as well as links, demos, patches, music, artwork, novels and lots more. Outstanding.

www.ttlg.com
A superb site for keeping up to date with the latest *Thief* news and discussions.

www.ttlg.com/fmp/
The home site for the t2x mod and the place to go for news, mission details, storyline info and more. Watch this one for that upcoming demo…

Your objective is to get in and steal the three winners' prizes then hightail it out again without getting caught. Lots of narrow corridors and rooms makes for a busy layout, but it all works pretty well. And beware, all that glistens isn't necessarily gold…

Alliance
Author: Jeremy Catlin
Filename: alliance.zip
Size: 4.9Mb
Rating:

Alliance has a great town layout. And that's a nice wall.

A medium-sized mission that sees you tasked with finding evidence of an alliance between the Mechanists and the City Watch. Together they would make a formidable force, so there are several parties who want to know if this is true. They need an expert to sneak in and find out – that's you. Make sure you check out any scrolls you find, and pocket anything valuable you see too.

Willow Island
Author: James "Gonchong" Roberts
Filename: willow.zip
Size: 3.9Mb
Rating:

Willow Island is simple thieving at its best.

A fan mission that will appeal to anyone into the high-tech look. Willow Island is a medium-sized map that will prove an enjoyable and entertaining challenge to all but the most experienced *Thief II* devotees. They, unfortunately, might find its simple robbery plot a tad too easy (Willow Island is inhabited by a bunch of art collectors who've obviously never spoken to their local Crime Prevention Officer). For the majority of fans however, a good evening's entertainment is here to be enjoyed. Interior settings are nicely designed and executed, the AI well used and the atmosphere almost spot on.

Jailbreak 2.0
Author: Baddcog aka Schwaa
Filename: jailbreak.zip
Size: 1.9Mb
Rating:

Locked up again, oh goodie.

Having originally accepted a job to steal Sheriff Truart's Silver Cog and finding the challenge to be a mission too far (you got yourself captured by the Mechanists, which hasn't proven to be much fun), your mission is now to escape from the prison you've been thrown into. Not easy, but help might come from unexpected quarters. If you want to really challenge yourself, then use the "expert" setting and you have to steal the Silver Cog as well. Make sure you find the note and use the map at the start.

Breakout
Author: Belboz
Filename: breakout.zip
Size: 1.5Mb
Rating:

One more step and it's arrow time. Where's his hand going?

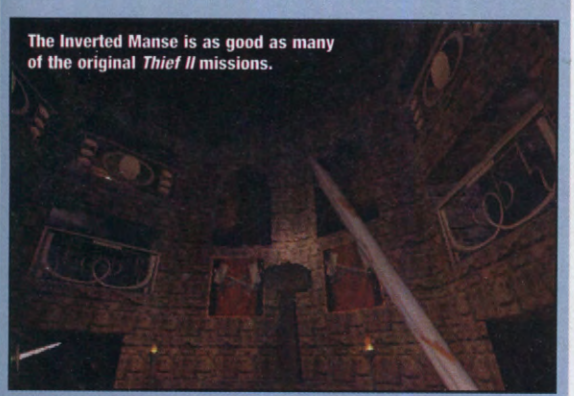
A simple challenge in which your friend Basso has managed to get himself arrested and incarcerated in Slade prison. His wife Jenivere has asked you to rescue him and see her round the back entrance. The layout is heavily gothic and prison-like with lots of eagle-eyed guards around to get in your way. Watch out for ladders and hidden paths that will make it easier for you to get around undetected, and you might get away with this one.

THE INVERTED MANSE

MAP OF THE MONTH THIEF II

Author: David "Sledge" Riegel and the Inverted Manse team
Filename: invman.zip
Size: 21.4Mb
Rating:

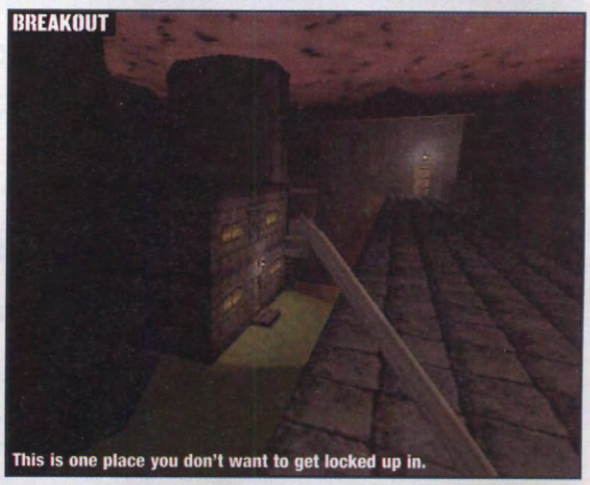
Definitely a mission that carries an 'essential' badge, David Riegel's Inverted Manse is a gem that no self-respecting *Thief II* fan should be without. It's a big file, but with some 30 custom textures, 50 new or redesigned objects, 50 new sounds, new items, new weapons, new skins and more atmosphere than you can shake a dagger at it's hardly surprising. The plot – raid a Hammerite factory, avoid hordes of the undead and escape with a book about the Spirit Stone – is classic *Thief*, but the map design, mission gameplay and fiendishly creepy feel of The Inverted Manse takes the game to new heights. It's a truly top-class effort – so much so that David is now working not only on the t2x mod but also on *Thief III*. Play it as a Catpurse, Rogue or Warrior to see three different facets of the same outstanding mission.



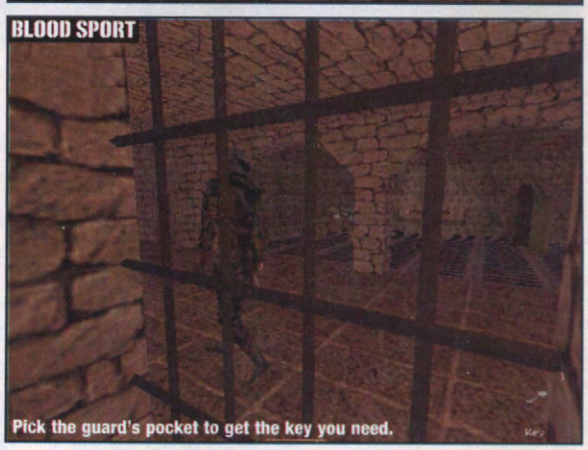
The Inverted Manse is as good as many of the original *Thief II* missions.

WILLOW ISLAND
He started it…

ALLIANCE
Get caught in the open and you'll have to fight your way out.



BREAKOUT
This is one place you don't want to get locked up in.



BLOOD SPORT
Pick the guard's pocket to get the key you need.

EARTH 2150

Mattel Interactive's superb real-time strategy game showed us a new level of detail with superbly crafted gameplay, great hardware and a landscape so lush you could almost mow the grass. The interface is intuitive, the learning curve gentle, and there's a built-in map editor too. *Earth 2150* is showing its age now, but still stands out as one of the best RTS releases of recent years, with a loyal fanbase and lots of maps still available.

Four Islands

Author: Spencer "Captain Lou" Armstrong
Filename: 4islands.zip
Size: 125Kb
Rating:

Grab the tactical advantage by being first to cross the water.

A huge map, but with only up to four players allowed you should hopefully have time to establish yourself properly before the shooting starts. As the name suggests, there's a lot of water here so you'll need to develop naval or air forces as soon as you can to find your enemies and grab the resources that are concentrated on the islands.

Proto Canyon

Author: Edward "Utopia Nation" Scrase
Filename: proto_canyon.zip
Size: 41Kb
Rating:

Canyon layout makes keeping your forces together difficult.

A medium-sized map for up to four players, set in a desert canyon environment with a river along the western and northern sides of the map. There are plenty of elevation changes and many small canyons that make it easy to ambush your enemies – or be ambushed by them. Explore carefully and don't let your forces get strung out in the claustrophobic canyon layout.

Canyon Run v1

Author: Bernie "Dragonfly" Novakovic
Filename: canyonrunv1.zip
Size: 107Kb
Rating:

A nightmare of canyons and armour-unfriendly escarpments.

A big map for up to four players, set in an early spring environment. Expect to find plenty of heavy terrain (impenetrable to all but airborne forces), steep escarpments that limit your movement, and waterways around the outside of the map that will allow a naval attack if you're not careful. As usual, build your defences quickly as the map design means a surprise attack is always on the cards.

CleaverLand v1

Author: Bernie "Dragonfly" Novakovic
Filename: cleaverlandv1.zip
Size: 116Kb
Rating:

CleaverLand gives you lots of build-up time.

A huge map for up to 13 players. Lots of resources mean no player should struggle, and the mountain ranges and waterways should keep the combatants apart for long enough to let everyone build up their armour. Naval firepower isn't the answer here, but it could still give a carelessly placed enemy base a nasty surprise.

Dry Lands v2

Author: Bernie "Dragonfly" Novakovic
Filename: drylandsv2.zip
Size: 139Kb
Rating:

Ambush is always a risk in Dry Lands.

Dry Lands v2 is a huge map for up to six players, set in rocky, volcanic terrain. A network of deep canyons cross the map, making the movement of large forces tricky without risking ambush. You'll also find some large, wooded areas and a lot of cash bonus items too – which are always welcome.

Karrawa Mountains v2

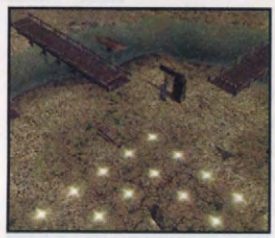
Author: Bernie "Dragonfly" Novakovic
Filename: karrawamountainsv2.zip
Size: 123Kb
Rating:

Karrawa is a monster map for lots of players and action.

A huge, winter terrain map for up to eight players, Karrawa Mountains v2 is a difficult map to win, but one with a layout (and potential player numbers) which makes for lots of action in short order. The ground is largely flat, with some gently rolling hills to add a bit of elevation here and there, which means there are few geographical features that you can use to your advantage.

Maze v2

Author: Bernie "Dragonfly" Novakovic
Filename: mazev2.zip
Size: 42Kb
Rating:



Control the centre to have the best chance in Maze v2.

A difficult map with a (rather contrived) maze layout which will make life very awkward. Your best hope of winning is to get control of the middle of the map so that you can at least react to an attack, which with up to 12 players allowed could happen very quickly indeed.

Maze v3

Author: Bernie "Dragonfly" Novakovic
Filename: mazev3.zip
Size: 44Kb
Rating:

Maze v3 is a-maze-ing (sigh).

Another maze map and this one's even more complex than the first. A huge, volcanic scene with up to 15 players allowed (yes, really) makes for frantic action and more units on screen at one time than you can shake a stick at. Who cares if the layout is unrealistic? With this much going on, you won't have time to complain.

KWAI PEAKS

MAP OF THE MONTH KWAI PEAKS

Author: Edward "Utopia Nation" Scrase
Filename: kwai_peaks.zip
Size: 93Kb
Rating:

Kwai Peaks is a huge map for up to ten players and if you're playing on your own you'll want to keep enemy numbers down or face a quick wipeout. The terrain is nicely varied in both surface and elevation, with a spring environment and a large river running from the south-west up to the north-east corner of the map. Watch out for secrets, underground tunnels and a special treat… if you have time to find it.

Kwai Peaks plays as good as it looks.

NET ADDRESSES

www.earth2150.com
The official website for the game, but now promoting *Earth 2150*'s sequel *The Moon Project* as well. That said, you'll still find a wealth of *Earth 2150* news, links, demos, videos, wallpapers and theme music. Some of the files are pretty big, so beware the phone bill demons, but it's a top site if you're a fan.

www.earth2150.co.uk
Originally a UK fansite, but now redirecting to the official dotcom.

http:\members.tripod.com/~learn2help/downloads.html
This is the web page where you'll find Dragonfly's *Earth 2150* maps. He's obviously keen, he's made more than 40 of them.

www.geocities.com/earth2150info/
The *Earth 2150* Information Center no less, and a good source for third-party maps and game information. Not updated for a while now, though.

http:\crash.to.earth2150
Audio, demos, backgrounds and wallpapers and some other bits and pieces. No maps.

Abel Gratis
Free e-commerce
Free Internet,
0800 & ADSLPackages
100% UK Coverage

Generate Extra Income
Create Client Loyalty

Become a FREE ISP
Visit:
www.abelvisp.co.uk

SIGN UP BY GOING TO:
http://www.abelgratis.co.uk
or see free software on cover CD

Email: support@abelgratis.co.uk
Support: 0906 680 4444
Fax: 0906 557 4444
Support calls at only 25p per min
Pentland View House, Lothianburn, EH10 7DZ

BIG TITTERS™
TELEPHONE INTERACTIVE PRACTICAL JOKES
YOU CAN HEAR THEM, BUT THEY CANNOT HEAR YOU!
•WORKS WITH MOBILES•
"MOBILE MADNESS!"
"PIZZA PARLOUR PUNCH-UP!"
"FAKE DELIVERY SCAM!"
"IT'S YOUR FAULT I'M LOST YOU PRATT!"
TEL: 0905 1000 828
CALLS COST £1 PER MIN AT ALL TIMES. RSL, PO BOX 59, STEVENAGE SG2 9BL

WANTED
CONSOLES
COMPUTERS
GAMES
RETRO & MODERN
SELL OR SWAP · POSTAL SERVICE AVAILABLE
COMPUTER & GAMES EXCHANGE
16 Pembridge Rd, London W11 3HL ✆ 020 7221 1123
Open 7 days 10am - 8pm
Please bring official ID with address & signature when selling or exchanging
HUGE SELECTION ON SALE

To advertise here call 0207 907 6682

How to turn a powerful, persuasive advertisement into wastepaper.

Your advertisement will hit the bin if it doesn't hit the target.

A publication with an ABC PROFILE will improve your aim.

No ABC. No guarantee.

Please send me more information about the ABC and its activities.

ABC
AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS
PROFILE

Name:
Position:
Company:
Address:
Tel:
Fax:

Audit Bureau of Circulations Limited.,
Black Prince Yard, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire HP4 1AD
Tel: 01442 870800 Fax: 01442 877407

COMMENT

The mainstream media want to pin the terrible events of September 11 on videogames. And they want me to help them do it? Not likely...

SHOOTING OFF Mike Anderiesz

Four hours... that's how long it took. Not for the horror of the Manhattan and Pentagon bombings to sink in, indeed 24 hours later as I write this, I am still struggling to come to terms with its many levels of twisted, fanatical logic.

No, I mean it took four hours for my phone to start buzzing with calls from tabloid editors and satellite news programmes, all with the same, thinly veiled objective.

How could they pin some of this on videogames?

"Surely," they asked, "there is some sick game where you play a terrorist...?"

"Not really," I interrupted. "In fact, if you want your visual references, try *Independence Day*, *Mars Attacks* or, in particular, the simultaneous terrorist demolitions at the end of *Fight Club*... Or for sheer tabloid sensationalism, look no further than the words of Nostradamus, written in the mid-16th century:

"Earth-shaking fire from the center of the Earth. Will cause the towers around the New City to shake: Two great rocks for a long time will make war, And then Arethusa will color a new river red. At five and forty degrees, the sky will burn, Fire approaches the great new city, Immediately a huge, scattered flame leaps up, When they want to have verification from the Normans."

My contacts were not convinced. They had decided there was a stronger link with videogames and it seemed my job was to find it.

All in all, I could not see the connection, or indeed the wayward editorial logic that would prompt anyone to search. And no, I told them politely with a nervous eye on my bank account, I would not be interested in writing the piece. That, I assumed was the end of it. Not likely.

Ten minutes later, an editor called me back. By rumour and conjecture, they had found their culprit. It was none other than *Microsoft Flight Simulator*. Despite being criticised for years for not featuring aerial combat, *MS Flight Sim* still featured scale 3D models of Manhattan, it featured Boeing 757s, and yes, you could crash one into the World Trade Center if you so desired. Even worse, the level of detail was so good, it was possible to accurately track the flight path from Washington to NYC to do it.

"If the mainstream media insist on jumping to such conclusions so easily, should we be trusting any of their other conclusions?"

Now would I write the piece (they wanted to know) and, if possible, could I also take screenshots of the plane hitting the building? No, I replied.

The story ran anyway by lunchtime the following day; on Sky News and in a couple of tabloids, and even on the prestigious Channel 4 news that evening. Evil terrorists using widely available software to plan and rehearse their fatal strike. Aviation experts looked at their screens with feigned horror – all looked as stunned as the older, less well-informed members of their audience would have been for all of 15 seconds.

If you delve deeper, of course, there are disturbing parallels, but not the ones the media spotted. Who, for instance, has not taken their first spin in a flight sim and crashed deliberately into some prominent landmark? It is as instinctive as looking up swear words in a dictionary, and to claim any of us do otherwise is a lie. The very thought that someone would take such a flight for real, with a hundred screaming passengers in the back, should rightly send a shudder up the spine of any game player.

The moral of this story is hardly surprising to someone who has worked for the tabloids for years. The cycle of hype and counter-hype that once encouraged publishers to push controversial games like *Carmageddon* and *Soldier Of Fortune* for easy column inches, has switched directions. Perhaps there is a legitimate debate to be had on the possible side effects of sim/realism, but knowing your culprit and then waiting for a crime to pin on him is surely not the way to do it. We can only hope the real decision makers do not leap to such easy conclusions when it comes to seeking retribution.

It remains to be seen whether any of this will rebound on sim publishers like Microsoft in the way it has on action game producers like Eidos and id, who regularly have to fight off civil actions from hysterical survivors of mass shootings. Nevertheless, the tabloids and the mainstream media in general will continue to condemn any videogame out of hand for little more reason than editorial whim. In the long run, this is terrible news for the industry and should certainly not be underestimated.

So, what have we learned from this story? As usual, the same old things:

1) If the mainstream media insist on jumping to such conclusions so easily, should we really be trusting any of their other conclusions?

2) Can videogames change in any way, to make their realism of less practical value to the sick and twisted – no matter how small that risk may be? This is not a debate to be avoided.

3) Do I feel inspired to write for the tabloids ever again?

Sadly, I only have an answer to the final question. Can you guess what it is yet? PCZ

Did the terrorists really use *MS Flight Sim* to plan the attacks?

Mike Anderiesz writes for several newspapers and magazines.

PC Games — Buy online at UKGames.com

MAX PAYNE
23.99

MYST 3: EXILE
21.99

OP. FLASHPOINT
24.99

GP3: DATA CD 2000
14.99

H-L: COUNTER STRIKE
17.99

FA PREM MANAGER 02
19.99

C'SHIP MGR 2001 / 02
21.99

TOP PC GAMES

AGE OF EMPIRES 2: THE CONQUERORS EXP	20.99
AGE OF EMPIRES GOLD EDITION	14.99
ALIEN VS PREDATOR 2	25.99
ANARCHY ONLINE (US IMPORT) (ONLINE ONLY)	29.99
B17 FLYING FORTRESS 2: THE MIGHTY EIGHTH	22.99
BALDUR'S GATE 2 EXP: THRONE OF BHAAL	18.99
BLACK & WHITE RR3/01	29.99
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2000 / 2001	19.99
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2001 / 2002	**21.99**
C & C: RED ALERT 2	27.99
C & C: RED ALERT 2 EXP: YURI'S REVENGE	18.99
CAESAR 3	9.99
CONQUEST: FRONTIER WARS	25.99
COSSACKS: EUROPEAN WARS	25.99
DESCENT 3	7.99
DELTA FORCE: LAND WARRIOR	19.99
DIABLO 2 LIMITED EDITION	18.99
DIABLO 2 EXPANSION PACK: LORD OF DESTRUCTION	16.99
EVERQUEST DELUXE PACK	19.99
F1 2001	29.99
FA PREMIER LEAGUE MANAGER 2002	**19.99**
FALCON 4.0	17.99
FREESPACE 1 & 2	7.99
FROM DUSK TIL DAWN	21.99
GRAND PRIX 3	7.99
GRAND PRIX 3 DATA CD: 2000 SEASON	**14.99**
GRAND THEFT AUTO	7.99
GRIM FANDANGO	14.99
HALF - LIFE	9.99
HALF - LIFE EXPANSION: BLUE SHIFT	14.99
HALF - LIFE GENERATION: COUNTER STRIKE EDITION	**17.99**
HARRY POTTER	28.99
HOMEWORLD	9.99
MAX PAYNE	**23.99**
MICROSOFT MECH COMMANDER 2	27.99
MICROSOFT TRAIN SIMULATOR	36.99
MYST 3: EXILE	**21.99**
MYSTERY OF THE DRUIDS	24.99
OPERATION FLASHPOINT: COLD WAR CRISIS	**24.99**
RED FACTION	**21.99**
RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN	**27.99**
SETTLERS 4	24.99
SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR	16.99
SHOGUN TOTAL WAR EXP: THE MONGOL INVASION	14.99
STARCRAFT & BROODWAR	8.99
STAR WARS: JEDI KNIGHT & MYSTERIES OF THE SITH	14.99
STAR WARS: GALACTIC BATTLEGROUND	25.99
SUDDEN STRIKE	25.99
SUDDEN STRIKE FOREVER EXPANSION PACK	16.99
SWAT 3	9.99
THE SIMS	28.99
THE SIMS COLLECTORS EDITION	34.99
THE SIMS DATA CD: HOUSE PARTY	18.99
UNREAL TOURNAMENT	9.99
WORMS WORLD PARTY	16.99

PC NON GAMES SOFTWARE

DARK BASIC 3D GAMES DESIGNER	28.99
DRIVING TEST SUCCESS	14.99
EASY CD CREATOR 5 PLATINUM + 10 74 MIN CD-R'S	42.99
GENERATIONS V8 FAMILY TREE UK EDITION	28.99
IBIZA EJAY	24.99
INTERNET CLEAN UP	17.99
MCAFEE VIRUS SCAN V5.0 STANDARD EDITION	28.99
NORTON ANTIVIRUS 2002	44.99
WEB ARTIST	7.99
WEB ARTIST 2	18.99
WINDOWS XP	FROM **89.99**

PC Peripherals - Prices include VAT — Buy online at UKPC.net

SAVE ££'s

128 MB RAM **22.99**
256 MB RAM **39.99**

SAVE £20

FREEOLA 56K INTERNAL MODEM
19.99 INC VAT

SAVE £30

EPSON STYLUS C20 SX / UX
59.99 INC VAT

SAVE £30

SPARKLE GeFORCE II MX 200 (64MB)
69.99 INC VAT

SAVE £20

40 GB IBM HARD DRIVE
89.99 INC VAT

SAVE £30

BTC 8432 CD RE-WRITER
69.99 INC VAT

GAME BOY ADVANCE
ONLY £82.99
IN STOCK NOW

Buy online at MAXXPC.COM

MAXX PC

Hand built in the UK from only the latest, top brand name components

All of our our MAXX PC's include:
40GB Hard Drive, 256 MB Ram
CD Writer and DVD Drive!

"Totally Outrageous" - PC Home
"A Great Machine" - PC Plus

PC Home GOLD AWARD ★★★★★
PC Plus GOLD AWARD
WHAT PC? BEST BUY BEST BUY BEST BUY
PC Gamer BEST BUY

All MAXX PCs are available with
0% Finance
& Buy Now Pay in 6 months with Just a 10% Deposit

From only £699.99

WIN A GAME EVERY SINGLE DAY
GAMEADAY.CO.UK

THERE IS NO LIMIT TO THE AMOUNT OF TIMES YOU CAN WIN!

Special Reserve
Discount Network
Specialreserve.net

0870 725 9999

UKGAMES.com

7 BIG CLUB SHOPS OPEN 'TIL LATE

BASILDON
Festival Leisure Park, Basildon, Essex
☎ 01268 28 77 76

BRISTOL
351 Gloucester Road (A38), Bristol
☎ 0117 924 5000

CHELMSFORD
43 Broomfield Road, Chelmsford
☎ 01245 348 777

EGHAM
168 High Street, Egham, Surrey
☎ 01784 473 444

NOTTINGHAM
164 Derby Road, Stapleford, Nottingham
☎ 0115 949 1000

SAWBRIDGEWORTH
The Maltings, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, Herts
☎ 01279 322 399

UPMINSTER
209/213 St Mary's Lane, Upminster, Essex
☎ 01708 22 55 44

WIN: A GAME BOY ADVANCE, PS2, CARS, HOLIDAYS & MORE!!
Over £13 Million in prizes
WINACAR.CO.UK

DOMAIN NAMES
From £9.99* FOR 2 YEARS
GET YOUR .BIZ & .INFO TOP LEVEL DOMAINS NOW FROM
GetDotted.com
* PRICE EXCLUDES VAT

Incredible Free Offer From Special Reserve

CHOOSE ANY FREE GIFT WHEN YOU JOIN SPECIAL RESERVE (£7.50). THERE IS NO OBLIGATION TO BUY ANYTHING. OVER 50 GIFTS LISTED AT 1FREE.CO.UK OR UKGAMES.COM
FOR ALL FORMATS. ORDER BY PHONE ON 0870 725 9999, OR VISIT ANY SPECIAL RESERVE DISCOUNT STORE. SAVE JUST FIVE REDDIES TO CHOOSE ANOTHER FREE GIFT!

FREE ULTRA FIGHTERS & F18 CARRIER STRIKE FIGHTER FOR PC... ZJL10
These two wicked flight sims are more than enough for any fam of the genre

FREE GRAND THEFT AUTO FOR PC ...ZJL16
Steal cars, out run the cops, shoot rival gangs or just run them over. This game has it all

FREE CHEF'S LUV SHACK FOR PC ...ZJL14
Join Stan, Kyle, Kenny & Cartman for a crazy gameshow hosted by Chef

FREE TOCA TOURING CARS FOR PC ...ZJL19
16 of the most powerful cars drive onto the famous British race circuits for thrilling laps!

FREE JIMMY WHITE'S SNOOKER 2 - CUEBALL FOR PC ...ZJL5
"the ultimate snooker simulator you could wish for" - PC Gamer

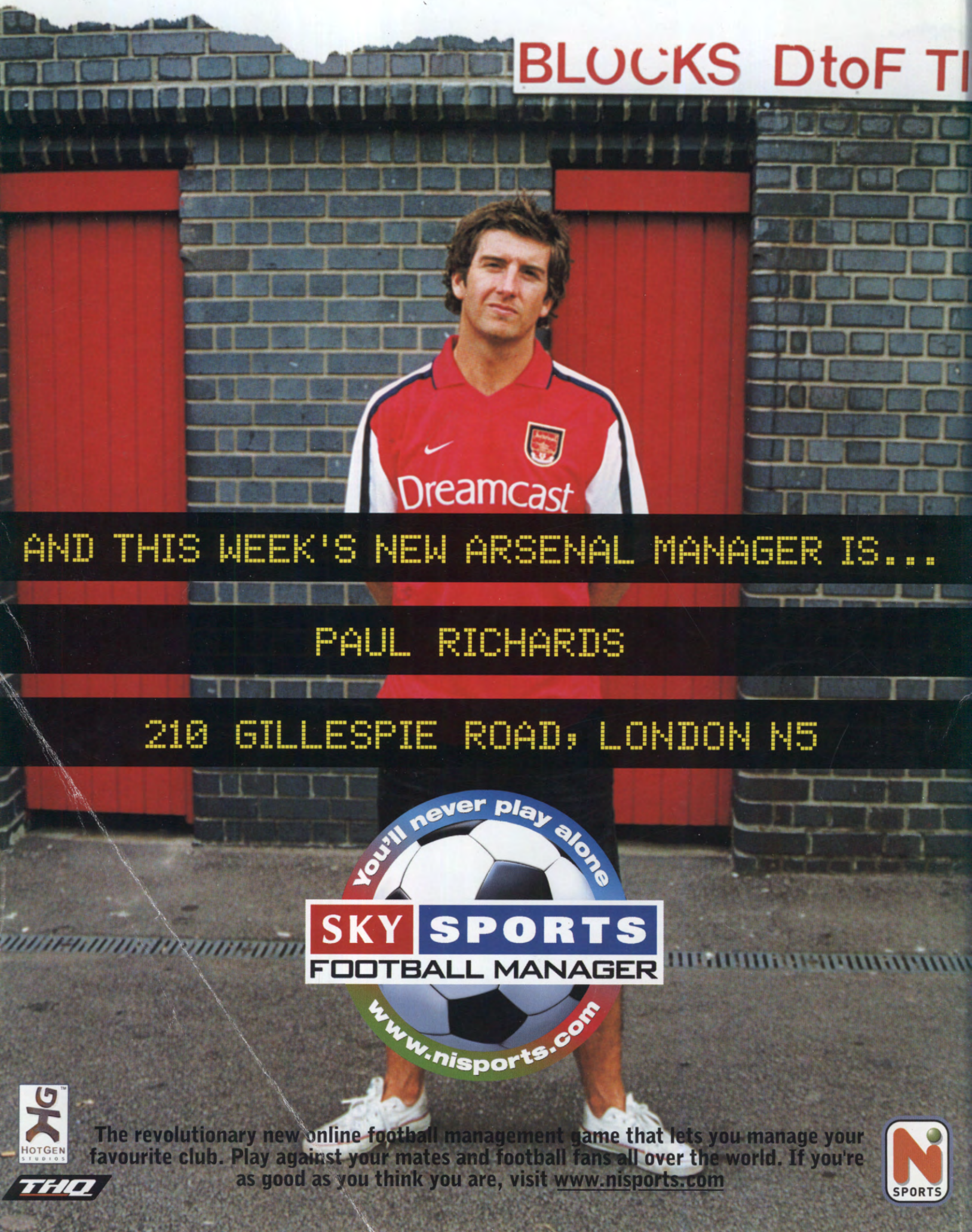
FREE DESCENT 3 FOR PC ...ZJL17
An amazing first-person shooter, with great graphics, crisp sound and well addictive multiplayer mode!

FREE LOTUS SMARTSUITE MILLENNIUM EDITION FOR PC ... ZLOTUS
This great gift includes almost every Lotus application known! All for Free!

FREE PC STRIKE FOR PC ...ZSTICK
This advanced analogue joystick features 2 Fire buttons, Variable Auto-Fire, and suction feet!

Prices are for Special Reserve Members only and all prices include VAT and postage & packing. Annual UK Membership is £7.50. Trial Membership (mail order) is £1 including one magazine. Dual Pricing for Members/Non-Members applies in all shops. All offers are subject to availability. Prices & specifications may change. Save = Save off manufacturer's RRP. E&OE - Errors and Omissions Excluded. Satisfaction Guarantee and 0% Finance subject to status. Sent to press 26/09/01.

www.nisports.com



HOTGEN STUDIOS

THQ

The revolutionary new online football management game that lets you manage your favourite club. Play against your mates and football fans all over the world. If you're as good as you think you are, visit www.nisports.com

SPORTS